

THE
LIFE,
AND
MIRACLES,
OF
S. Wenefride;
Virgin, Martyr,
AND
ABBESS;
Patroness of WALES.

God is Wonderful in His Saints. *Pf.*
lxvii. V. 36.

Printed in the Year 1712.



THE LIFE

AND

ABBESS

OF

God is their Father in the Spirit

Printed in the Year 1710

THE
PREFACE
TO THE
Devout Pilgrims.

TIS to you, of what Degree and Condition soever, that I dedicate these few Sheets. You in equity claim a right to them, above the rest of Great Britain; because with painful, yet cheerful Steps, you measure journeys from the remotest Part of our Island, to the miraculous head of the Holy Spring; where you mix with the rapid Current warm

The Preface.

Tears of perfect Contrition, and shivering in the Stream, you look up to that Omnipotent Power, Which raised S. Wenetride to such eminent Sanctity and Glory. I have seen tender Virgins, who would look pale and tremble at a Northern Blast, sinking themselves under Water, offering their Vows and Prayers, with as great Alacrity, as if they had been partaking of the most transporting Joys upon Earth. The Interior Fire of Divine Love, got the upper hand of the Cold Element, and flaming Petitions mounted up to bring down expected Blessings. No Complaint was heard, except this pious one, That they knew little of the Merits of the Saint; only, that this was the Place of her Martyrdom, and that it was famed for Miraculous Cures, both of Soul and Body. This valuable

The Preface.

ble Consideration engag'd me to undertake what I here offer unto you, not to gratify Curiosity, but to promote Piety and Devotion.

The Life of S. Wenefride was first written by S. Elerius, who is frequently mention'd in it; from him Robertus Salopiensis collects and supplies, especially what related to the Translation of her H. Body, he being the Chief Agent in bringing the same to his Monastery. This Robert, the worthy Prior of Shrewsbury (who afterwards for his great Talents, was chosen Abbot) wrote the Saint's Life, soon after the Translation of that Treasure, which was in the Year of our Lord God, 1138. His Sincerity is much commended by Cardinal Baronius, Surius, Pitts, and Posssevinus. It was penn'd by him in Latin,

The Preface.

tin, and dedicated to Guarinus, Prior of Worcester, both being of the H. Order of glorious S. Benedict. He tells Guarinus, that what he presents him with, is from the Ancient and Undoubted Monuments and Records of such Monasteries and Churches, as the Virgin is known to have lived in ; as also from the Depositions of venerable Priests, worthy of all Credit, for their Religious Profession, Sanctity of Life, and great Learning. That he omits what's less certain, as her Journey to Rome, and other Passages, not sufficiently attested : So nice and scrupulous was the good Prior not to recommend any thing to Posterity, which was not uncontrollable Matter of fact. 'Tis true, he ought to have observ'd the Rules of an exact Historian,

The Preface.

storian, as to the Tears of her Life, Death, and Translation, which he omitted. However out of other Classical Authors I set down the Centuries.

To proceed with greater Security, I also take for my Guide, that Learned Antiquary and Accurate Annalist, the R. F. Michael Alford, S. J. who in his 2d Tome, printed Anno 1663, treats at large this Subject: I likewise read attentively the Church History of the R. F. Serenus Cressy, set forth in the Year of our Lord 1668, who in the Preface acquaints the Reader, that altho' great part of his Volume is owing to F. Alford, he has other Ancient Records to assist him in carrying on the Work. This Religious Author, being of the H. Order of S. Benedict, I rationally supposed, that he might have such Manu-

The Preface.

scripts in custody, as came not to the knowledge of other Writers, which possibly had been secur'd by the Body, at the dissolution of Monasteries. Neither of them vary as to the Relation of her Life and Death, they only differ in a Name or two, viz. Trebuth for Thewith, and Caradocus for Cradocus, who imbrued his Hands in the H. Virgin's Sacred Blood.

Doubtless you will observe, that this Edition of S. Wenefride's Life is rather to be look'd on as a Re-impresion, with some Amendments of the former Book, set forth in the Year 1635, by J. F. of the Society of Jesus, which he translated from a very Ancient (as he declares) and Authentical Manuscript of Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury. The Two First Letters of his
Name,

The Preface.

Name, and Calculation of the Time when F. Alford lived, brings to my Thoughts, that very probably it was he who English'd it ; For Cressy tells me in his Preface, that altho' the mention'd Author publish'd his Tomes under the Borrow'd Names of Alford, alias Griffith, his real Paternal Name was John Flood. I owe so much Deference to the Memory of this Learned Man, whose Merits are known by his elaborate Works, and who had the perusal of the most Ancient Records of Britain, that you'll find little more than the Substance of your former Book, yet must have leave to say, that the English of it is so obsolete, and the Tacking of the Words together so much differing from the present Way of Writing, that most People desir'd it might appear something more polish'd

The Preface.

lish'd. I may add, That 'tis a difficult matter to procure a Copy; and on this account, those devoted to our Sacred Patroness, languish'd after a fresh Supply from the Press.

I have kept my self so close to the Historical Part, that altho' frequent Opportunities invited to enlarge, I absolutely refused to make any additions of my own. I have rather abbreviated, when I concluded some Periods not very material; and this to lessen Bulk. A few Occurrences are reduced to proper Places, and some Passages are added out of H. Scripture, to set in a truer light the Vertues of S. Wenefride and others. What is said of S. Beuno's Nobility, I relate out of an unquestionable Manuscript, and I presum'd that the Supplement of a few Late Miracles would add Fuel to
the

The Preface.

the Fire of Devotion. You'll find me faithful to the Author ; my only Apprehension is, that I have been deficient in the Saint's due Praises. Some perchance may think that I am too liberal in the Elogium, for we are fallen into an Age of Infidelity, and we are dreadfully overrun with Deists, I wish not with Atheists too, who sap the very Foundation of Reveal'd Religion, and allow equal credit to the Alcoran and Thalmud, they do to the Old and New Testament. Such as will not believe that the Rod of Aaron commanded Streams from a Dry Rock, or that Lazarus rotting in his Tomb, return'd to Life, will droll upon St. Wenefride's Well and her Resuscitation. As if there were no Mean between too credulous a Belief, and the Madness

The Preface.

Madness of believing nothing at all, when shocking our wild Fancy, tho' back'd with the strongest Evidence of Humane Authority.

Others, by the Misfortune of Education (whom I truly compassionate) will be something out of humor, when they find undoubted Miracles in that Church which they reject: How the Primitive Pastors, as S. Beuno, whose Feast is celebrated on the 14th of January, and St. Elerius's on the 13th of June, exhorted Rich, Noble, and Beautiful Virgins, to renounce the World, and to consecrate themselves wholly to their B. Redeemer, by Religious Vows: How on this account S. Wenefride offer'd herself a Sacrifice, to preserve her Vow'd Virginity; which pure Oblation was so acceptable to God, that He recompensed

The Preface.

compens'd it with such a stupendious Miracle, as neither the precedent (says Cressy) nor subsequent Ages of the Church (save that at S. Paul's Decollation) could afford one to equal it. These Men are unwilling to hear how S. Beuno despis'd his Hereditary Patrimony and Glory, to become a Poor Minister of the Gospel; how in the Primitive Times the H. Mass was offer'd to the Eternal Father, to apply the Fruits of our Redemption; how SS. Reliques were honor'd, and praying for the Faithful Departed was practis'd, as S. Elearius confided S. Wenefride would do for his Soul, he being of opinion that she would survive him, &c. If these Christian Articles are to be set aside and antiquated, by consequence General Councils, Canoniz'd

The Preface.

niz'd Doctors, and *Ancient Histories*, must be suppress'd and repeal'd, as delivering and encouraging the same *Primitive Doctrine*.

Quick sighted Alford foresaw it expedient, if not necessary, to solve an *Objection*, which some captious *Criticks* might glory in, viz. *Why V. Bede* makes no mention of glorious *St. Wenefride* in his *History*. He answers, * that *Bede*, *Malmesbury*, *Huntington*, and other *Ancient Authors*, who wrote at large of some *Saints*, are silent in the praise of our *V. Martyr*, because they only recorded the *Acts* and *Monuments* of their respective *Saints* and *Churches*. *Ven. Bede* in particular declares he only design'd to write the *History* of his own *Nation*, which was the *English Saxon*; hence he makes no mention of

* Ad An. 660. Num. 37.

The Preface.

S. Patrick, S. Ursula, of the SS. David, Dubritius, Kentigern, who were illustrious Lights of the British Church. Alford adds, That there being an irreconcilable separation betwixt the Britains and Saxons, not only as to Distance of Place, but likewise as to Tempers and Affections, all manner of Commerce was interdicted; insomuch that Ven. Bede, who liv'd and dy'd in the North of England, could not have such certain Knowledge of what pass'd in the West, as to insert it in his History.

In this little Undertaking I look'd on my self as a Debtor to the Unwise, as well as to the Wise *; therefore in handling the Subject, I avoided all quaint and uncommon Expressions, as might require Study in the Vulgar. Plainness
of

* Rom. i. xiv.

The Preface.

of Style without Theatre Dress, best becomes those who write to inform and edify the meanest State and Condition. I will not detain you any longer (my dear devout Pilgrims) yet before I take my leave, I most humbly and earnestly crave a charitable Remembrance at the H. Well, and I faithfully assure you of a grateful Return. We are all of us Passengers in this World, and no more than Strangers and Sojourners upon Earth. Let us unite in Prayer for a happy Finishing of our Journey, that after this Mortal Pilgrimage we may safely arrive at the glorious Fountain of Eternal Life, where we shall be inebriated with a Torrent of Pleasure, rendering thanks, loving, and adoring our most Merciful and Omnipotent God, World without End.

THE



*The Life, Martyr-
dom, and Mira-
cles of St. Wene-
fride, &c.*

MAny are the evident
Motives of *Credi-
bility*, clearly distin-
guishing the Un-
spotted Church of *Jesus Christ*
from Heterodox Persuasions,
which are built on Private
Fancy, and for the most part
on Faction. Among the rest,
B consummate

consummate *Sanctity*, and undeniable *Miracles*, challenge their due Places. The Holy *Apostles*, before they separated, to promulge the Gospel thro' the Universe, in the *Symbol* of Faith, instructed Future Ages, that the *Spouse* of *Christ*, purchas'd with the Effusion of His most Sacred Blood, is *Holy*; *I believe in the Holy Catholick Church*. Other Sects pretending to Religion, lean, or to speak more properly, lead on to agreeable Liberty, which powerfully invites, and brings over vast Crowds of loose *Proselytes*. As to *Miracles*, which set a Seal on the *True Faith*, the Immortal Son of God has assured us, that those *who believe in Him*, shall do greater Wonders,

Saint Wenefride. 3

Wonders, than He wrought Himself. * The Life of *S. Wenefride* is very conspicuous, as to Both these genuine Marks, Of *Miracles*, and *Sanctity*; as it will more clearly appear, by her wonderful Actions, and the several Steps by which she arrived at so high a State of Perfection.

In the Seventh Age after Man's Redemption, flourish'd many *Saints* of Both Sexes. I shall only mention those chiefly concern'd in this short History. *Saint Beuno*, the Glorious Instrument of *Saint Wenefride's* Second Life, and *Sanctity*, was born of Noble Parents in *Montgomery-shire*, at the Fall of the River *Rhym* into
B 2 *Severn,*

* *St. John*, xiv. 12.

Severn, therefore call'd *Aberhyw*. His Father *Binsi* descended lineally from *Cadell*, Prince of *Glesiwig*, and his Mother derived her Pedigree from *Anna* (who was marry'd to the King of the *Picts*) Sister to the Mighty and Renown'd King *Arthur*, who departed happily this Life, and was interr'd at *Glastenbury*, in the Year 542. His Grandfather was Saint *Gundeleius*, and he was near related to several Eminent Saints; amongst the rest, he was Cousin German to Saint *Kentegern*, Bishop of *Glasgow*, who, forc'd from *Scotland*, founded the Bishoprick of *St. Asaph*, from his Disciple of that Name, whom he left to govern that Church.

Young

Saint Wenefride. 5

Young *Beuno* was educated under the Direction of a Holy Man call'd Saint *Dangesius*, and he advanced so fast in Perfection, that he spent Two or Three Days and Nights in continual Prayer, so that he was drawn with Reluctancy to refresh fainting Nature. He took an early Surfeit of Worldly Vanity, he renounced the flattering Allurements of Terrene Pleasures, and exchanged the glittering Grandeur of an opulent Fortune for the poor Habit of a Monk; resolving to spend the Remainder of his Days in the Practice of Evangelical Counsels. Being well settled, and throughly grounded in the Apostolical Institute, he observed the following laudable

dable Practice, to promote the Honour of his *Creator*. When he had built a Church and Monastery, and there establish'd Regular Discipline, he remov'd to some other Part of the Country to perform the like Duty to God. So that in few Years he became a Common Father to numerous *Religious*, who respected him as their Holy Founder.

This zealous Monk having finish'd his Monastery at *Clynoc Vaws* in *Carnarvonshire*, found himself powerfully inspir'd to visit his Relations in *Flintshire*. 'Tis true, he had long before bid *adieu* to all Ties of Flesh and Blood, but he understood this Call, as a Voice from Heaven. A rich and potent
Lord

Saint Wenefride. 7

Lord in that Part of *North Wales*, where now *Holy-Well* is, had marry'd the Vertuous and Noble Lady *Wenlo*, Sister to Saint *Beuno*. His Name was *Thewith*, some write him *Trebwith*; but a Manuscript now before me, of one of the eruditeſt Antiquaries of the Laſt Age, ſays his Name was *Tyvid*. Theſe Parents of St. *Wenefride*, by an Exemplar and truly *Chriſtian* Life, ſurpaſs'd their High Extraction. They reckon'd ſolid Vertue as the moſt diſtinguiſhing Quality, and they pity'd Vicious Potentates, who are Contemptible in the Eyes of the *King of Kings*. Saint *Wenefride*, the Glory of *Weſt Britain*, was born in the troubleſome Reign

of King *Cadwallawn* ; and Saint *Beuno* made his Visit to his Brother in Law's House, in the Reign of King *Eluith*, the Second of that Name. The Venerable *Monk*, having with much Humility, and great Modesty, made himself known, he told them, That he was sent by *Almighty God*, to honour Him there, as he had done in other Places ; and that he neither expected, nor craved any other Favour, than a small Parcel of his large Territories, sufficient to build a Church on ; *where others, with my self* (said he) *will daily pray for your Safety and Happiness.*

Thewith (I shall style him so for the future) was not in the miserable Catalogue of those thoughtless,

Saint Wenefride. 9

thoughtless, blind Worldlings, who are prodigal in Vanity and Ostentation, but start and frown at the first Proposal of parting with small Matters for the Advantage of their Souls. No, he look'd forward with other Eyes, towards a more Permanent Being, than here upon sordid Earth; therefore return'd the following Answer: *With good reason, Holy Father, I am oblig'd to give you part of the Lands I now possess, for His Sake and Service, Who bestow'd them all upon me. You have pleasur'd me, in asking this Charity, which is more advantageous to me than to you, who propose it. Therefore from this very Day, I do absolutely alienate from my self, and my Posterity, this*

Manor I now live in, and with joy, I surrender unto you all my Right and Title, and I put you into possession. I humbly beg a Favour, that having One only Child, a tender Virgin, who is my special Comfort, you'll instruct her in Heavenly Documents, that her Life and Conversation may be Holy, Pleasing to God, and Joyful to her Parents. After this generous Settlement, the Nobleman made choice of a Dwelling Seat, not far distant from the Place he had given to St. Beuno; where, on a Hill, he could see the Church, where the Servants of God prais'd their Maker.

As Constantine the Great, at the Building of Saint Peter's Basilica, divesting himself of his

Saint Wenefride. 11

his Imperial Robes, took up the Spade, broke Ground, and carry'd Twelve Baskets of Earth, in honour of the 12 Apostles, to cast into the Foundation, in testimony of his Devotion to the Primitive Princes of *Christianity*; so in imitation of this Heroic Pattern, the Noble Lord *Thewith* set aside State and Birth, many times putting *his own Hands* to the Holy Work. This he did to encourage others, and to contribute in some sort to the finishing of the Fabrick. The Church being made fit to offer in it the *Divine Sacrifice*, he and his Spouse, with their only Child, were daily present at *Holy Mass*. They had this Pious Custom, to place their
Daughter

Daughter at the *Saint's* Feet, at the time of his Exhortations to the People, advising her to give attention to his Excellent Doctrine. This was not necessary, altho' religiously suggested by Pious Parents; for she was so much transported with a Holy Delight in hearing him preach, that she frequently visited him alone, to discourse of Self-Knowledge, and *Christian Performances*.

'Twas her Parents Intention to marry her to some Nobleman of the Country, and to bestow on her a most plentiful Fortune; but her Ever Blessed Redeemer, in those tender Years, was disposing her sweetly for His Service. By *Saint Beuno's* frequent Discourses,

Saint Wenefride. 13

courses, she understood, how Great, how Good, and how Glorious, the Heavenly *Spouse* was; that voluntary Virgins are like *Angels* upon Earth; that *they follow the Lamb, wherever He goes**. That the Honours of the World are vain, and its Pleasures short lived; so that *the very Thought of a Terrene Husband became hateful unto her*. Wherefore she resolv'd to keep her self undefil'd, and to consecrate her pure Virginitie to the *Lord* of Heaven and Earth. One main Difficulty occur'd, how to render her Parents favourable to this Heavenly Call. She burned with the Love of *God*, and at the same time she resolv'd to fulfil the Commandment

* Apoc. xiv.

14 *The Life of*

ment of *Honouring Father and Mother*. In this Struggle betwixt Divine Vocation and *Christian Duty*, the *Bestower* of all Lights put her into a Method, how to prepare the Way towards her Happiness, by making use of *Saint Beuno*, as a Glorious Instrument.

This *Holy Man* was honour'd as a Saint by her *Parents*, and by consequence she knew very well, that he had great Power and Authority with them, and they would not reject any reasonable Request made by him, such as she took hers to be. Impatient of losing time, for compleating her Design, having found him one Day alone, and at liberty, she acquainted him with the Holy Fruits of
his

Saint Wenefride. 15

his moving Discourses, and after a very pathetick manner, humbly petition'd for his zealous Concurrence, in preserving the rich Treasure of her Virginity, which she resolved never to part with, for all the Offers the flattering World could make her. *S. Beuno* was agreeably surpris'd at this most welcome News; for, as *S. Paul*, he desir'd all *to be like unto himself* *. He had unshaken Confidence in God's Power and Goodness, that He Who had begun the Work, would give it the Finishing Stroke. Moreover, being no Stranger to the singular Piety of those he was to treat with, he cheerfully undertook the Task, to the unexpressible

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

pressible Satisfaction of the expecting Virgin.

We cannot read without flowing Tears, how Faithful *Abraham*, in obedience to God's Command, had his Hand lifted up to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*, his Only Begotten Son, whom he lov'd *; not so much as demurring at the first Intimation of the Omnipotent; perchance it may move us to Devotion, by a serious Consideration, how the Lord *Thewith* entertain'd this unexpected Petition of his dear Child. Besides the Internal Gifts of Grace, and apparent Vertues, which charm'd her devout Parents, her Stature was well proportion'd, her Face was matchless, her Modesty equalled

* Gen. xxii. 2.

Saint Wenefride. 17

led her Beauty, Qualifications much admir'd by Mankind. She was the agreeable Object of their Eyes, the Support of their Family, and the Prospect of their Happiness upon Earth. Yet no sooner had Saint *Beuno* deliver'd his Sentiments, as to the Nature of the *Offering*; That it was a sort of *Holocaust* to sacrifice their Affections, and to bequeath to their *God* the dearest Creature in the World, whom they loved more than they did themselves; with other persuasive Reasons to the same effect. The Holy Man, I say, had no sooner ended his Discourse, but contrary to the Weakness of other fond Parents, Tears of Joy came trickling down Lord *Thewith's*

Themith's Cheeks, who with his *Spouse*, broke out into the Praises of *Jesus Christ*, for so highly favouring their only *Child*. They then call'd for their Daughter, and gave her full and free leave to forsake the World, wishing her a happy Progress in the Way of Perfection. They likewise declar'd, That the *Heavenly Spouse* having made choice of her, they intended to make Him Heir of what they design'd for her Dowry, by disposing of the same, to His greater Honour, in Pious and Religious Uses. They drew also this Advantage to themselves, of renouncing the World, so far as was consistent with Persons in their Station. They enter'd into a firm

Saint Wenefride. 19

firm Resolution of giving to the Poor great part of their Princely Wealth, of retiring from Worldly Noise and Hurry, that with an undepending Freedom, they might be more absolute Masters of short time, to provide, and send before them never ending Treasures to Heaven.

The Pious Virgin receiving this coveted Grant, concluded that she could never return sufficient Thanks to *God* for the Favour. She watch'd whole Nights in the Church, either kneeling or prostrate before the Altar, where she imagined to her self, that she was in her Immortal *Spouse's* Presence Chamber. Contemplation rais'd her up into Admiration of His Infinite

finite Perfections; so that to hear *Jesus Christ* only named, brought joyful Tears into her Eyes from a flaming Heart. Pure Delights overflow'd her Soul; and looking towards Heaven, the World appear'd base and contemptible. To add Fuel to this pleasing Fire, she procur'd a little Oratory near unto Saint *Beuno's* Cell, to visit him with greater Ease in the Day time, and in silent Night, to practise her *Master's* Spiritual Lessons.

The implacable *Enemy* of Mankind, suspecting that such high Beginnings of Perfection in tender Years, might prove a powerful Invitation to other Noble *Virgins*, of despising themselves and the World, employ'd

Saint Wenefride. 21

employ'd one of his incarnate *Emissaries*, to defeat the Design of the *Holy Ghost*. What *Hell* cannot effect, by its own immediate Suggestions, it too frequently brings about, by the insinuating Arguments of Lewd Mortals. Wherefore, such as induce others to forfeit Divine Grace by Mortal Sin, are detestable Instruments of rebellious *Lucifer*. As the *Devil* put into the Heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Son of God *, so he cast an impure Flame into the Heart of *Cradocus*, King *Alen's* Son, to commit a sacrilegious Rape upon *Christ's* Lovely Spouse. He was sottishly enamor'd with the Charms of her Person, not casting an eye on the

* John, xiii. 2.

the Beauty of her Vertues; so waited for an Opportunity, to gratify his Brutish Passion, which thus happen'd. One Sunday, Saint *Wenefride's* Parents being gone to Church before her, and she for a short space detain'd at home on a Charitable Account, soon to follow after; the Prince having intelligence, enter'd the House, under pretence of Business with the Lord *Thewith*. At first, the Holy Maid, not at all suspecting his Insincerity, or Design, receiv'd him very courteously, with an humble Apology of her Unworthiness, to entertain one of his Royal Birth: *But if you please* (said she) *to repose your self in a more convenient Room, till Divine Service*

Saint Wenefride. 23

Service is ended, my Father will be at liberty to serve you. To this candid and obliging Answer of the bashful Virgin, Cradoctus, now more than ever inflamed with sinful Desires, reply'd in the greatest Disorder, That nothing cou'd be more agreeable than to stay in her Company, since it was then solely in her power to make him happy. If she comply'd with the ardent Desires of a passionate Lover, she might expect all the Happiness his Power and Quality was capable of bestowing upon her.

Altho' the Virgin blush'd and trembled at the Immodesty of this wicked Proposal, yet being perfectly present to her self, in the dangerous Occasion,

casion, and fortify'd with Divine Grace and Light from Heaven, she answer'd; That there was not the least doubt to be made of enjoying Honours, Wealth, and Worldly Happiness, by being espous'd to so Noble a *Prince*; that she was in great Confusion, to be so suddenly surpris'd, in such mean Attire, not becoming his Presence: *Wherefore, permit me* (said she) *to enter my Chamber, adjoining to this, to better my Dress.* Cradocus in the heat of his Passion, unwillingly gave ear to the Virgin's Petition, yet could not refuse a Request accompany'd with so much Modesty, and seeming Deference to his Quality. She no sooner got clear of so impudent a Guest,

Saint Wenefride. 25

Guest, but slipping out privately by another Door, she immediately ran towards the Church, sure of meeting with Protection there from so Villainous an Attempt. Mean time, the Prince impatient of so long a delay, and not without some Suspicion of what had happened, rush'd into the Room, to which she retir'd; not finding her there, he pursued her so eagerly, that he overtook her on the descent of the Hill before she cou'd gain the Church. There with a drawn Sword in his Hand, and with Fury in his Face, he threatens to separate her Head from her Body, unless she quickly consented to his Will.

C

Here

Here methinks appear'd a lively Representation of the Anguish and *Perplexities* on every side, of Chait *Susanna*, whose Honour and Conscience was attempted by the two Lascivious Judges. If she consented, 'twas Death to her, and if she did not, she would not escape their Hands *. The Noble Israelite, came to this final Resolution, 'Tis better for me, without the Act, to fall into your Hands, than to Sin in the sight of our Lord. Oh! That Christians, had such a Horrour, and Detestation of Mortal Sin, to look upon it, as more hideous and Frightful than a violent Death. St. *Wenefride* was of that settled Opinion, she

* Dan. xiii. 22.

Saint Wenefride. 27

she had Two sorts of Deaths, waiting for an Answer, a separation of the Soul from the Body, or a *Separation of the Soul from God*, she did not ballance upon the Matter, but Undauntedly, and Heroically reply'd; How, by her Parents Approbation, she was Holily Espous'd to the Son of God, who infinitely exceeds all Power and Beauty upon Earth, that she would be Faithful, and Constant in her pure Affections, and rather lose her Life, than to admit any Corrival. *Neither shall your Menaces, and Terrours, (said she) draw me from the Sweetness of His Love, nor so overawe me, as to make me recede in the least, from Executing what I have promis'd.*

As it happens sometimes, that despis'd carnal Love, turns into Rage, so it fared with Barbarous *Cradocus*, who seeing himself scorn'd (as he thought) gave such a deadly Blow to the *Virgin's* Neck, that the first Stroke sever'd the Head from the Body : Which falling upon the descent of the Hill rowl'd down to the Church, where the Congregation was Kneeling before the *Altar*. As they were terrify'd, with the Bloody Object of her Head, so they were astonish'd, to behold a clear and rapid Spring, gushing out of that Spot of Ground, her Head *had first fallen upon*, which to this very Day, is Visited from all Parts, by *Devout Pilgrims*. The Place of
her

Saint Wenefride. 29

her Martyrdom, had before her Death, the Name of the *Dry Valley*, or *Barren Bottom*, which was changed into the Title of *Finhon*, which in Old *Welsh*, signifies, a *Fountain*, or *Well*. 'Twas also observ'd, that the Stones of the Well, were Tinctur'd with Drops, as it were of Blood, to perpetuate the Memory of what she had shed for the Love of *Christ*, and in Process of Time, 'twas taken Notice of, that the Moss growing round the *Well*, had a very fragrant Smell, as an Emblem of the Odour of her Angelical Vertues.

To close the last Act, of this Inhumane Tragedy, and to relate the dreadful Stroke of Divine Justice, on the Cruel

Tyrant, we are to premise with Brevity ; that the just Grief of the Holy Virgin's *Parents*, is not to be express'd, seeing their Dear *Child*, so Villainously Butcher'd, almost before their Eyes. St. *Beuno*'s Vertue was also put to the Test, to bear with true Resignation the Loss of so Devout a Creature. Tears came trickling down his Cheeks, at the Sight of the horrid Murther. The Afflicted People with united Voices, call'd upon *Heaven* for speedy Execution against him, who had committed that heinous Outrage. Indignation accompanied Compassion, when they beheld the unrelenting *Assassin*, wiping his Bloody Sword upon the Grass, and glorying

Saint Wenefride. 31

glorying in the detestable Fact, without any Fear of God, or Man. Saint *Beuno* was preparing to offer the *Unbloody Sacrifice* of our Redemption; but being inspir'd by Him, Who declar'd, *Revenge to Me, and I will repay it **; he left the Altar, and taking the B. Martyr's Head into his trembling Hands, he mounted the Ascent towards *Cradocus*. He fear'd not such a Blow as was given to the tender Virgin; on the same account for the Love of *Christ*, he would have bid it welcome. Faithful Servants of God dread nothing, Sin only excepted. Being come up to him, he said: *Thou wicked Man! Who without any regard to Innocence,*

C. 4.

*. Deut. xxxii. 35.

Innocence, or Beauty, has massacred a Princely Virgin, no less nobly born than thy self. Nor dost thou repent, or seem sorry, as thou oughtest to do, for this horrid Sacrilege. I here beseech my Heavenly Lord, that for an Example to others, He will please to execute His Divine Judgment against thee; who has murdered His Spouse, troubled His People, violated His Sabbath, and besprinkled this Holy House with Blood, which I consecrated to His Service. As the Earth swallow'd up rebellious and perverse Corah, so some affirm, that at St. Beuno's last Words, Cradocus not only dropp'd down dead; but also that the Earth open'd, to give passage to the
luxurious

Saint Wenefride. 33

luxurious Body to sink towards his Monstrous Soul, or that the *Master* whom he had served, *The Devil*, carry'd it off; for it is certain, that the Carcass of the cruel Murtherer never afterwards appear'd.

The *Faithful* glorify'd God in His Justice, but could not curb their Grief. Saint *Beuno* earnestly exhorted the Parents and People to turn from Lamentations, and to address the *Creator* of Souls, and *Raiser* up of Dead Bodies, that as He had commanded back *Lazarus* to Life, rotting in his Monument, so, to His greater Honor and Glory, and for the Comfort of the sorrowful *Parents*, who had so generously dedicated this Darling Child to

34 *The Life of*

His Service, He would graciously vouchsafe to restore her to Life. He then join'd the Sacred Head to the Pale Body, covering both with his Cloak, after which, he offer'd up the Holy Sacrifice of our Salvation.

After Mass was ended, he lifting up his Hands to Heaven, made the following Prayer. O Lord Jesus Christ! For Whose sake, this Holy Virgin contemn'd the World, and languish'd after Thee; by the Tender Bowels of thy Mercy, Love, and Bounty, be graciously pleas'd to grant us the Effect of our Vows and Prayers, humbly offer'd unto Thee. We are fully persuaded, that this Godly Virgin, who liv'd holily, and dy'd for Thee with great Constancy, is now highly exalted, and wants

Saint Wenefride. 35

*no more the Society of us Mortal
and Miserable Creatures. Tet to
manifest Thy Omnipotence and Su-
preme Dominion, which Thou hast
over Souls and Bodies, which are
never dead to Thy Power of re-
anitting them; as also to multi-
ply the Merits of that Soul, whose
Body lies here before us : We crave
a Second Life for her; to the end,
that after a long and plentiful
Harvest, laden and enrich'd with
new Merits, she may return unto
Thee, her Eternal Spouse, and the
Beloved of her Heart; Who with
the Father and the Holy Ghost,
rulest on Earth, and reignest in
Heaven, for ever and ever.
The Pious People, drown'd in
Tears, having with Sighs and
moving Sobbs, answer'd de-
voutly, Amen; the Virgin a-
rose,*

rose, as newly awaked from Sleep. She wiped her Eyes and Face, to clear away that Glorious Dust, which had settled on her Lovely Head, when it tumbled towards her Dear Saint *Beuno*. The Decollation of Saint *Wenefride* is celebrated on the 22d of *June*.

Contemplate here (Dear Reader) the Joy and Admiration, which then transported all present, at this wonderful Miracle. Tears burst out more plentifully, but flowing from a different Cause. They magnify'd and bless'd the Boundless Goodness of her Great God, every one resolving to rise with the *Saint*, to a Newness of reforming their past Lives. One Particular in this surprising

Saint Wenefride. 37

sing Resuscitation is very remarkable, viz. When her Parents, and others, fix'd their Eyes upon her Neck, they observ'd a *Pure White Circle*, no larger than a small Thread, quite round it, denoting the Place, where the Separation had been made; which always after remained. From this, the great Veneration of the People for her, changed her Name, which was *Brewa*, into that of *Wenefride*. *Wen* in the Old *British* Tongue signifies *White*, and other Letters were by an Alteration added to this Syllable, to render more agreeable the Sound of the New Name. In the many Apparitions after her Second Death, when she shewed her
self

self to her Devout Clients, they always took special Notice of the aforesaid *White Circle*, which intimated to them the indelible Mark of her *Sponse's* Affection, for suffering that Mortal Wound so courageously for His sake.

Permit me here to break off for a while the Thread of this Discourse, by a short but necessary Digression; in order to obviate the Cavil of some Modern Incredulous Criticks, who seem now adays to entertain such strange Notions of these Supernatural Works of Almighty God, that they believe nothing that suits not exactly with the fanciful Ideas of their own Brain. These Refiners will be apt, not only to carp at what is here related,

Saint Wenefride. 39

lated concerning this Holy Virgin's Return to Life, but perhaps also turn to ridicule what follows hereafter, of her sending Presents to *S. Benno* by the Current of the Miraculous Fountain; and several other wonderful things, contain'd in the following Pages. As it would be highly criminal to pretend to fathom the Wisdom of God by our shallow Capacities, or to confine His Omnipotence to the bounded Limits of the greatest Power upon Earth; so it would be Madness in us to believe every thing, without rational Grounds and sufficient Authority. But when we find such Instances of the Infinite Power and Goodness of Almighty God, as we have
here

here in this History, recorded by Learned and Pious Witnesses, and handed down to Posterity by an uninterrupted Tradition, for several Ages together, and never question'd till these our Days. It is the Duty of every Rational Man and Pious *Christian*, rather to acknowledge the Goodness of God, Who appeared Wonderful in these His Works, than dispute His Power by cavilling at Facts, only because they seem to shock his foolish Imagination. To condescend to the Weakness of future Ages, Divine Providence seems to have taken particular care we shou'd not want undoubted Examples of this Nature, to facilitate our Belief. We know
the

Saint Wenefride. 41

the * Prophet *Elizeus* call'd
back to life the Son of the *Su-*
namite. † Saint *Peter* rais'd
Tabitha, and Saint *Paul* the
Young Man that fell from the
Window. Again, (a) When
the Sons of the Prophets were
cutting down Wood on the
Banks of the River *Jordan*,
the Head of One of the Axes
fell into the Water. The H. Pro-
phet *Elizeus* cutting a Piece of
Wood, in Form of a Handle
to it, cast it into the River.
The Iron immediately, con-
trary to its Nature, came from
the Bottom, and join'd the
Wood. If some of our Mo-
dern Criticks, who pretend to
more Wit than Religion, durst
publish their profane Notions
on

* 4 Kings, iv. † Act. ix, 30. (a) 4 Kings, vi.

on this Occasion, as freely as they do in other miraculous Cases not mention'd in Holy Writ, they would ask, *By what* " Sympathy
" the Iron was moved from the
" Bottom of the River, to seek
" for, and by what Art it
" found out the Piece of
" Wood swimming on the Sur-
" face of the Waters? Whe-
" ther the Recovery of the lost
" Head of an Ax, was a Mat-
" ter of such Importance, that
" God should think fit to em-
" ploy His Omnipotence, in
" working so great a Miracle
" to find it? " But to silence
all such profane Reflections in
those who pretend to *Christia-*
nity, Almighty God has been
pleas'd, not only to work this,
and the like Miracles, but pro-
vided

Saint Wenefride: 43

vided they should be stamp'd with *Divine* Truth, and deliver'd down to all Ages to come, in the very Word of God it self.

Is it harder to believe that a little light Bundle shou'd float upon the Sea, and arrive safe in a Creek, near unto which Saint *Beuno* then lived, without the least Damage, than that the Head of an Ax, a lumpish Piece of Iron, shou'd swim upon the Surface of the Waters of the River *Jordan*, and join a Piece of Wood thrown in after it, in Form of a Handle? Without doubt Both Facts are wonderful, Both Miracles.

I know there is a very wide, and as I may say, an infinite Disparity between *Miracles* register'd

gister'd in Holy Scripture, and those recommended to Posterity by Learned and Unquestionable Authors. But when Facts are so fully attested by a Cloud of Witnesses, and delivered down to us by the universal Belief of all Ages, as in the Case before us, of our Saint's being rais'd to life by the Prayers of Saint *Beuno*, and of the Manner she sent Presents to him afterwards; it wou'd be as unpardonable in a Rational Man to refuse his Assent, as to deny that there ever was such a Person in the World as *Julius Cæsar*, or that whatever *Josephus* the Historian has left written of the *Jewish Wars*, was nothing but a meer Fable. Let then the Atheist rally, let the

Saint Wenefride. 45

the Incredulous mutter; all Good *Christians* know, that the Son of God, Who neither can nor will deceive, has made this Infalible Promise to His Church, That He will be with her *to the End of the World* *, and that they who believe in Him, shall not only do the Works He did, but even *Greater than those shall they do* †. Can the Hand of God be shorten'd? Or, Can His Goodness receive any Diminution? No, no, Your Omnipotence, O Lord, is still the same, and of Your Mercies there is no End.

Whatever this incredulous Age may think of this great Miracle of our Saint's Return to Life; it appear'd so evident to

* Mat. xxviii, 20. Joh. xiv, 12.

to the *West Britains*, and redounded so much to the Honour of God's Church, Saint *Beuno's* Sanctity, and the power he had with his *Creator*, that many *Pagan People*, remaining in those Parts, came to hear the *Holy Man's* Instructions in the *Catholick Faith*, and to receive Baptism.

S. Wenefride according to her former Practice, like *Mary* at the Feet of *Christ*, sat on a Low Seat before him. She was never satiated with the Heavenly *Manna*, which fell from his Angelical Tongue. She counted as nothing what she had already done, or suffer'd, and restless to be more strictly united to her Beloved *Sponse*, she aspir'd to the Height of Perfection. Wherefore

Saint Wenefride. 47

Wherefore she most humbly begg'd upon her Knees, to be solemnly veil'd (according to the Custom of the Primitive Ages) that by entring into a Religious Course of Life, she might put *Hell* to greater Confusion, which had fiercely attempted to dishonour *God* and her self: But mostly, that she might pour forth her Soul in the Presence of her Eternal Spouse, with a flaming and disengaged Heart, entirely His, and say; *Behold I have left all things, and have follow'd Thee **.

St. Beuno with Tears of Joy, comply'd with this Religious Request, and perform'd the Ceremony in a numerous Assembly. He knew to what a Degree

* St. Mat. xix. 27.

Degree of Sanctity the Spirit of *God* would raise her, for His own Glory, and the Improvement of others; therefore he spent whole Days in cultivating her Soul, in what regarded a *Religious State*. She, as an apt Scholar, took in so fast the frequent Lessons, and put them in practice so punctually, that it struck her Master into Admiration. He finding her so far advanc'd in an interior Life, that she was even able to direct and govern others in the Way to Perfection; one Day he call'd for her *Parents*, and after the following Manner deliver'd unto them his *Sentiments* and *Resolutions*.

Saint Wenefride. 49

As you (said he) have most liberally bestow'd a Church and House for the Service of God, and for the Help and Benefit of the Faithful, so His Divine Majesty, has more than sufficiently requited your Charity, by conferring on you Spiritual Favours, but more especially on your Child, whom for the the time to come, you may follow as a safe Guide, in our Blessed Redeemer's Service. I am call'd on by Heaven, to another Place; and I leave you to the Grace and Goodness of God, and to the rare Example of your Daughter. Then turning to Saint Wenefride, he said, Our Lord, Dear Child, has appointed you to succeed in my Labours. March on in the Way of Vertue, as I have taught you, and guide
D others

50 *The Life of*

others on the Road to Eternal Life. Gather in this very Place, for your Heavenly Spouse, many Pure and Devout Virgins; but know withal, that here you shall not end your Days; for after the Term of Seven Years, spent by you in Prayer and Austerities, for your own Merits, and Edification of others, our Gracious Lord will summon you to another Place, that Strangers may be instructed by you, and come to the true Knowledge and Service of Him, for Whose sake you fell a Victim of Purity.

When the Ancients of Ephesus had heard Saint Paul declare unto them, that they should see no more his Face, they fell upon his Neck, and there was great Weeping. In like manner,*

* *Act. xx. 25.*

Saint Wenefride. 51

ner, when Saint *Wenefride* was acquainted by her admir'd Master, that she should not see him any more in this World, a lawful Grief seem'd to overwhelm her. To comfort her in such deep Affliction, Saint *Beuno* took her by the Hand, and led her to the Chrystalline Fountain, the Place of her Martyrdom; where they sitting together on a Stone, bearing to this Day, the Name of Saint *Beuno's* Stone, and which lieth now in the Outward Well; You see (said he) the Monument here of your Sufferings. Behold also the Stones, as tinctur'd with your Blood, which was shed for the Glory of your Heavenly Spouse. Be you therefore attentive, and mindful of

D 2 what

what I do foretel you, concerning Three special Favours, whereby your Glorious Spouse Jesus Christ will hereafter honour your self, and by your Prayers, benefit others. The First is, That these Bloody Spots shall never be wash'd off from the said Stones, but ever remain, as triumphant Signs of your Blood, spilt in defence of your Chastity. The Second is, That any Person who shall devoutly ask Temporal Blessings, or Freedom from Spiritual or Corporal Distresses, to be obtain'd by your Merits and Intercession, the same shall compass his Request, if it be to the Honour and Glory of God, by paying their Devotions three times at this Well. If what he petitions for be not
for

Saint Wenefride. 53

for the Advantage of his Soul, and therefore is not granted; at his Death by your Prayers he shall reap more ample Fruit, and in the Next World Everlasting Blessings. *The Third,* That after my Departure into a more remote Part of this Island, God will give me a Cell near unto the Sea Shore; so that whenever you send any Letters or Tokens to me, as I intreat you to do at least once every Year, only cast them into the Stream of this *Fountain*, and they will come safe unto me. *Which Wonders will be gloriously divulged of you, to the End of the World.*

He then conducted her back to the Church; where he added: *Behold this Church, and*
D 3 *Buildings*

Buildings round it, which have been rais'd by the Munificence of your Parents; these I leave unto you to be converted into a Monastery of Chaste and Holy Virgins, who moved by your Pious Instructions and Exemplar Life, may put in practice those Divine Lessons, which I have often deliver'd unto you; that is, The Contempt of the World, and an entire Abnegation of themselves; which are the Foundation of Religious Perfection. Strive therefore, Dear Child, in all things to exhibit your self as a lively Pattern of Vertue. As to my poor self, I will go whither the Spirit of God shall direct me, and shall ever retain in my Heart and Soul, a most Fatherly and Loving Memory of you.

To

(a)

Saint Wenefride. 55

To experience the racking effects of a rational Sorrow, is nothing derogatory to solid Vertue. The *Holy of Holies* not only groan'd, but wept at the Tomb of *Lazarus* *, and he shed Tears upon *Jerusalem* †, for the future Calamities of that obstinate City, which would not know the time of its Visitation. The Royal Prophet, a Man according to God's own Heart, upon taking his last farewell of his beloved *Jonathas*, they wept together, but *David* more (a). It must not then seem strange, that the tender Heart of this doleful *Virgin*, was ready to split asunder with Grief, at the last
Adieu

* *St. John* xi. 35. † *St. Luke* xix. 41.
(a) *1 Reg.* xx. 41.

Adieu, in this World. The more he attempted to sweeten this bitter Separation, his charming Words caused her swelling Sorrow to float higher ; infomuch, that when she saw him, with his Staff in his Hand, ready to depart, she rated the approaching Loss, as the heaviest Cross upon Earth; and could not forbear expressing thus her self unto him ; *Now Holy Father, I am to be left alone, as a Poor Orphan Child without a Nurse, or as a Silly Sheep, amongst ravenous Wolves, without a Pastor to defend me. I was always safe with you, always joyful in your Presence, always instructed by your Exhortations, and edify'd by your Example. These Words, attended with flowing*

Saint Wenefride. 57

ing Tears, so much oppress'd Saint *Beuno's* Heart, that not being able to utter any Answer, he bless'd her with his Hand, and hasten'd his pace in the Beginning of his Journey.

Nothing now could comfort her, save only the fresh Remembrance of all his Pious Instructions, and an earnest Desire of executing obediently his Commands. Accordingly, in a short time she associated to her self many Noble and Devout *Virgins*, who observ'd such Rules as she establish'd for them. She order'd nothing but what first she practis'd her self; and Miracles were not wanting to increase her Authority and the Opinion of her Sanctity. Their Love

and Respect towards her, caused each of them to contend who should be most forward in the Imitation of her rare Perfections. They nauseated forbidden Pleasures, they undervalued Wealth and Honours, and they seem'd to be Inhabitants of a *Terrestrial Paradise*, in loving and serving their Heavenly Spouse, the Son of God. She govern'd her Subjects with endearing Commands, so that they obey'd with equal Merit and Content. She eas'd them in their Difficulties and Temptations, insomuch that they observing her Rigid Mortification, her Angelical Purity, and knowing the Strict Union she had with God in Prayer, whatever she

Saint Wenefride. 59

she declar'd unto them, was receiv'd as Oracles from Heaven.

The spreading Fame of *St. Wenefride* was wonderfully dilated by miraculous Cures of Diseas'd Persons. They were frequent and apparent, and divulg'd thro' other Parts of *Wales*. Many flock'd from distant Places to hear her discourse and to receive Instructions, whom she sent away with flaming Hearts, and ardent Desires to be faithful and fervent in the Service of their God. They regretted a Return to their respective Habitations: And as the Queen of *Saba* stood astonish'd at *Solomon's* singular Wisdom, so these admiring Strangers magnify'd the constant

constant Happiness of the Virgins she govern'd, and blessed those who *always stood before her* *. they having such a secure *Mistress*, and so tender a *Mother*.

Gratitude for receiv'd Favours is not only a Moral Virtue, but the Eternal Employ of *Cherubins* and *Seraphims*, who are now adoring, and offering never ending Thanks to the Infinite Goodness of their Omnipotent *Creator*, Who commanded them out of the Chaos of nothing. Saint *Wenefride* had a most grateful Soul; she honour'd Saint *Beuno* as an Eminent Servant of God; she loved him as a *Father*; she respected him as a *Master*; and could

* 3 Reg. x. 8.

Saint Wenefride. 61

could never sufficiently acknowledge her Duty to her greatest *Benefactor*, after Him Who made her. Saint *Beuno* deliver'd to her the First Rudiments of Perfection; he incited her to embrace a *Religious* State; he obtain'd for her by his Prayers a Second Life, and polish'd her Interior, that she was amiable in the Sight of God and Men. To make some small return, she sent him every Year a Token, after the manner he had prescrib'd. In the Beginning of *May*, almost a Year after his Departure, with the help of her Religious *Sisters*, she finish'd a curious Embroider'd *Vestment*; and wrapping the same in a Woollen Cloth, she went down with.

with her *Religious* and others, to the Well Side, and casting the Bundle into the Water she said; *Holy Father, according to your Command and my Promise, I send unto you this small Token of my Love.* To the great Astonishment of numerous Beholders, it passed down the Stream into the River, then into the Sea, and it landed near the Monastery where Saint Beuno then dwelt, many Miles distant from the *Holy Fountain.*

The *Holy Man* was then walking on the Sea Shore, and wonder'd what that Bundle should be; but opening it, he remembered the charge he had given to Saint *Wenefride*, and that as he had foretold, it came miraculously to him, without the

Saint Wenefride. 63

the least Sign of Wet or Moisture. This *Vestment* he preserv'd with great Care in the Church, for the Celebration of Holy *Mass*. He likewise receiv'd fresher Lights of her present and future Sanctity; how much *Almighty God* would be honoured by her, not only at *Finhon*, but in other Places whither Divine Providence should direct her to go. The *Virgin* never intermitted to send him a Yearly Present, till his most happy Death was reveal'd unto her, and the Glorious Reward he was crown'd with in Heaven.

This last Passage may appear to Incredulous Drolls the most surprising of all others in the History of Saint *Wenefride's* Life.

Life. Therefore Divine Providence thought fit to authenticate the Memory of it to this very Day, and after this manner. In *Carnarvonshire*, Eight Miles distant from the Town of *Carnarvon*, there is a Little Creek where the Sea runs up, call'd in *Welsh*, *Porthy Casseg* (corruptedly, as I could instance in other Appellations) for *Porthy Cassul*, or the *Port of the Vestment*. Here the First Present of our Saint miraculously landed; and the Place retains the Name to this Day. Near unto this Inlet there stands a Large Parish Church call'd *Clynnog*, in which *St. Beuno* was buried, his last founded Monastery being there. His Tomb is yet extant, and is had in great veneration

Saint Wenefride. 65

reverence by the Inhabitants. The History of St. *Wenefride's* Life was curiously represented in the Glass Windows of *Clyn-nog* Church; but has been so defaced, that little now appears. What can be more persuasive to obtain Credit to this Miracle, than so Ancient and so Certain a Tradition, even to those who use their utmost efforts to destroy the Memory of Miracles. The *Port of the Vestment* solves the Objection from the Year 660 to this of 1712. As Apostolical *Tradition* is the Unwritten Word of God, and by it we receive the H. Scriptures, and the Sacred Interpretation and True Sense of them, as what regards Infant *Baptism*, &c. let
it

it be lawful for me to say, that as to *Humane Faith*, uninterrupted *Tradition* from Father to Son for so many Centuries, is a clearer Attestation of *Fact*, than if it had been recorded in Written History.

After Saint *Beuno*'s Decease, Saint *Wenefride* began to feel in her Soul clear Illustrations and strong Impulses for removing from the Monastery where she was. She had the comfort to see her *Religious* so well grounded in Perfection, that her Presence was not necessary. Wherefore in the End of the Seventh Year of her Government (as the Saint had foretold her) she took leave of her Spiritual Children and of her Loving Parents. 'Tis easily

Saint Wenefride. 67

ly imagin'd that as the *Virgin Martyr* was under a severe trial at the Departure of Saint *Benno*, whom she call'd her *Father*; in like manner these Noble Religious Virgins had heavy hearts and flowing eyes, when they understood that their dearest *Mother* was fully resolv'd to leave them. To compose and quiet them she declar'd that *it was the Will of God*, and as they had submitted unto her, they ought to shew undisturb'd obedience to their *Heavenly Spouse*: That all things ought to be welcome, coming from His Fatherly Hand, and appointed them by Infinite Wisdom. So, having compleated necessary Orders, she embraced each of the *Sisters*,

sters, and chose One of them for a Companion in her Journey. Before her Departure she went down to visit the Place of her *Martyrdom*; where falling upon her knees in fervent Prayer, she humbly besought the *Creator* of Heaven and Earth to direct her in this New *Pilgrimage*, and likewise to *encrease* His *Blessings* on such, who in a devout manner should visit that *Well*, where for His Honour she had suffer'd the Loss of her Life. The many Miracles in subsequent Ages, gave clear testimony that her Charitable Petition had the gracious assent of *Him* Who is the Bestower of all Good Gifts.

Saint *Wenefride* having recommended to God her Monastery

Saint Wenefride. 69

stery of *Finhon*, her Parents, and her Friends, Divine Providence directed her to the Cell of Blessed *Deifer*, Eight Miles distant from the *Holy Well*. This *Recluse* was much in *God's* favour; and *Robert*, Prior of *Shrewsbury*, recounts of him several evident Miracles, which for brevity are here omitted, because my sole Intention is to set forth the Merits of our Glorious *Patronefs* of *Wales*. The Holy Man told her that *God* had not made any thing known unto him as to her Journey: *But have patience* (said he) *this Night, and I will inquire after His Blessed Pleasure.* Saint *Deifer* spending the Night in Prayer, according to his custom, heard a
Voice

Voice towards Morning, which said ; *Tell my dear Virgin Daughter Wenefride, that ſhe repair forthwith to the Village Henthlant, where the Venerable Saturnus will fully inſtruct her as to the Place of her Abode during Life.* Deifer acquainted her with his Commiſſion, and likewise aſſur'd her, that this *Holy Neighbour* (ſo he call'd him) would be enabled from Heaven not only to ſatisfy her where to fix, but likewise he would inform her of other things relating to her ſelf. After that, he directed her in the Way to *St. Saturnus*.

It pleas'd Almighty God to honour the Virgin's Progreſs by revealing the ſame to ſeveral Saints, and the Occaſion of
her

Saint Wenefride. 71

her Journey. Amongst the rest was Saint *Saturnus*, who gave her a charitable reception at *Henthlant*. Great part of that Night they spent together in Prayer and Holy Conferences ; and to her great Consolation he entertain'd her with many Spiritual Lectures. He acquainted her in the Morning that there was a Place not far off, call'd *Witheriac* (now vulgarly *Guitherin*) which was enrich'd with precious Reliques of many Glorious Saints, who had liv'd and dy'd there ; and on this account it was highly revered by Devout People. *This Place* (said he) *is appointed you by Divine Providence for your Temporal sojourning upon Earth: You'll find there a Holy*
Abbot,

Abbot, by Name Elerius, who is of so great Mortification, and of so great Union with God in Prayer, that he's entirely dead to the World. I am order'd to send you to this Man, and farther to let you know, that you'll experience under his Conduct a Cælestial Tranquility of Mind. You'll likewise find there a Monastery of chaste Virgins, who have been train'd up from their very Infancy in solid Vertue. You are destin'd by Heaven to improve them more in Perfection by your Example and Instructions. In process of time these Religious will submit themselves unto you, as to a Mother and Abbess, who is sent providentially unto them by their Heavenly Spouse.

Saint

Saint Wenefride. 73

Saint *Wenefride* was transported with Joy, hearing this agreeable Relation of her Happiness so near at hand. She most humbly begged his Blessing, and Directions how to finish her Journey. The Holy Man, out of Respect and Reverence, accompany'd her himself part of the Way. At parting he gave her his blessing, and order'd his Deacon to conduct her to Saint *Elerius*. 'Twas no small Comfort to her that she was travelling towards a *Monastery* of pure *Virgins*, and there to enjoy their Angelical Conversation.

Guitherin is now a Village, whatever it was in former times, in *Denbighshire*, near
E the

the River *Cluide*, which separates this County from that of *Flint*. Saint *Elerius* had here his Monastery in a Vale call'd *Vallis Clutina*, where several Religious Persons of Both Sexes embraced his Institute, and follow'd his Example.

The Holy Abbot had a Revelation of her Coming, and of her distinguishing Merits; therefore to honour her, he met her at some distance, and led her to the Church. After they had prayed a while together, he took her aside from the *Deacon* and her Companion, telling her, that he was no Stranger to that Heroical Act, of suffering a violent death to preserve her Virginity.

Saint Wenefride. 75

nity; that the Miraculous Fountain was an evident Testimony of it; and that he would cheerfully assist her in the Designs of His *Divine Majesty*, intended by this her Journey. The *Virgin* reply'd, *That as to her self, she had only this to offer; That as she had been guided by God's Holy Spirit to find him out, so in the future Course of her Life, she would be an obedient Child, in hearing and observing his Directions.*

The Holy Abbot was extremely edify'd at this humble and modest Answer. He told her, That if she pleas'd, they would spend that Night in Prayer, for greater security in this important Affair. This they did; and he having re-

E 2 ceiv'd

ceiv'd clearer Lights from Heaven, was replenish'd with incredible Joy, and told her in the Morning, that *Almighty God* would not be wanting to increase His Fatherly Love towards her. Without saying more, he led her out of the Church to the Monastery which was under his Government, and he spoke thus to the Religious *Virgins*.

Rejoice, Dear Children of God, for that it hath pleas'd your Heavenly Spouse to send a New Star of wonderful Brightness to shine amongst you. He has provided you such a Companion as will enrich your Souls with the Treasure of Religious Perfection, by the Pattern she'll set before you. This is the Renowned Virgin *Wenefride*,

Saint Wenefride. 77

nefride, who as you have heard, suffer'd a Glorious Death, in defence of her Chastity. This is she whose Triumphs are recounted in Churches, and whose Trophies illustrate the Province where she lived. Rejoice therefore, because she is come to remain and end her Days amongst you. Happy is her Arrival! Preserve carefully this inestimable Treasure. Mark and imitate the Example she'll shew you, and give attention to the Spiritual Documents she'll deliver; because for this Christ has sent her. Having utter'd this Speech to the Religious in general, he address'd the Venerable Abbess Theonia with these few Words: To you, Dear Mother, after a more special manner, I recommend a respectful Entertainment

of this Sacred Spouse of Christ, Who by directing her hither, has signally regarded and regaled your Family. After this he withdrew, leaving Saint *Wenefride* amongst them, blushing, and as it were sinking under the Burthen of her own Praises.

Not only Abbess *Theonia*, who was a very Holy Woman, but Saint *Elerius* also, held frequently private conferences with Saint *Wenefride*; and discoursing of Heavenly Mysteries and Vertuous Practices, they discover'd her to be so clearly illuminated in the First, and so solidly grounded in the Second, that Both of them admir'd the rich Treasury of her Soul. When the *Abbot* return'd to his *Monks*, who liv'd
not

Saint Wenefride. 79

not far off in Austere Discipline,
'twas his Custom to magnify
the Merits of this *Stranger*,
and seem'd not able to express
what was due unto her.

At length the Fame of her
Sanctity was so much divul-
ged, that numerous Crowds
of all Callings flock'd to *Gui-*
therin, to behold a Noble Cou-
rageous Creature, who to se-
cure her Virginity had suffer'd
the Loss of her Head, and
who after Death, to the greater
Glory of her *Spouse*, by a Holy
Man's Prayer had return'd to,
Life. They importun'd her to
shew the *Pure White Circle*
round her Neck, which she in-
dustriously declin'd, till at the
request of her *Sisters* she yield-
ed to their Pious Desire, lest

she should seem to affect *Humility*. The Glorious Scar forced Tears of Compunction from their Eyes, by reflecting how Heroically and with what Fortitude she receiv'd the Mortal Wound from the Sword of cruel *Cradocus*, rather than once to offend her *God*, and how often they had shew'd their Weakness, in complying with the First Suggestions of the Infernal Enemy, and shameful Proposals of a wicked Companion.

Saint *Elerius* going one Day to the Monastery to visit the Living *Martyr*, and to confer with her in Spiritual Matters, they enter'd occasionally on the Subject of *the Happiness of dying well*. He told her, That he often

ten

Saint Wenefride. 81

ten took complacency in the Thoughts of having her near him when he lay on his Death Bed, *and that after his Departure* her Prayers would afford him Relief for the Repose of his Soul. *No Father* (said she Prophetically) *Christ hath appointed otherwise.* You shall live to bury our Dear Mother Theonia, and a few Tears after to bury me: Then some time being expir'd, your self shall pass from this transitory World, and go to Him, of Whose Kingdom there is no End. All this came to pass as the Saint foretold.

Soon after this Prediction Theonia was visited with her final Sickness; and finding herself near her End, she receiv'd from Elerius's hands the Blessed

E 5 *Sacrament,*

Sacrament, as her *Viaticum* to conduct her safely towards Heaven. The *Religious* were on their Knees round her Bed, lamenting bitterly the foreseen Loss, whom she comforted after this manner: *Children! Tears are not to flow for Friends or for our selves, unless some Evil hath happen'd or Misfortune. Our present Case has no such countenance: As to my self, I am hastening to my Heavenly Spouse, (as I hope) Who calls me to Him. As to you; B. Wenefride, a more Holy Mother, will succeed me, who by Words and Works will improve you in Perfection. Follow her steps, and you will not wander nor go astray. Then being spent, she breath'd out her pure and precious Soul. Her Obsequies being*

Saint Wenefride. 83

ing solemnly and christianly perform'd by St. *Elerius*, he appointed *Saint Wenefride* Abbess, to govern the *Monastery*. Her profound Humility dissuaded her from undertaking the Charge, but the Obedience she had promis'd the Holy *Abbot*, and the repeated Petitions of the *Sisters*, notwithstanding Natural Reluctancy, wrought her at last into compliance.

The nice Art of governing *many*, whose Geniuses and Constitutions are as differing as the Features of their Faces, is attended with such vast Difficulties, that *Solomon* being favour'd and honour'd by the *Almighty* with that unlimited Offer, *Ask what thou wilt, that*

I may give it thee *. The considering *King* petition'd for what was most necessary, to rule the numerous *Israelites*; he desir'd not Riches or Glory, but *Wisdom*, a *docible Heart*. Saint *Wenefride* was naturally Prudent, and her *Spouse* bestow'd upon her a more than ordinary Talent of Governing; so that wish'd for Success answer'd Expectation. He bless'd *that Head* with supernatural Wisdom, which had been sacrificed to his Honour. She made use of the same Maxims and Methods at *Guitherin*, as before she had done at *Finhon*. Her Commands were intimated with such Affability and Discretion, that they appeared
to

* 3 Reg. iii. 5.

Saint Wenefride. 85

to her Subjects so many Intreaties. She went constantly before the rest in the most painful Duties of the *Monastery*; and altho' the Dignity of her Office requir'd due Distance, she not only convers'd with her *Sisters* as with Equals, but also look'd upon herself as the least deserving in the whole *Community*. She had the true Spirit of Poverty, and was so much averse to Superfluities that she would scarce admit of Necessaries. She was most rigid in Abstinence, and *Patience* had taken such absolute possession of her Heart, that not the least Entrance was allow'd to Anger and other inordinate Passions. Her Prayer was continual, when not interrupted

ted by Duties of Charity, and necessary Sleep. She was frequently favour'd with *Raptures* and *Extasies*. She never dropp'd any Word tending to her own Commendation, and was sensibly afflicted when others mention'd any thing in her Praise.

The Blessed *Martyr* inculcated daily to her *Sisters* to have always before their eyes the Grand Example of their Dear *Redeemer*, and to copy out such Vertues as He exercis'd, to instruct as well as to save them: That they ought to study a pure Intention in all their Actions, to serve *God* for His own sake. She earnestly recommended Fortitude and Perseverance, as strong Armor
to

Saint Wenefride. 87

to overcome all sorts of Temptations. That they ought not to be dismay'd in these Spiritual Conflicts, for by the Conquest they would obtain the Crown. *Prayer* (she said) when well perform'd, did dilate their Souls, and prepar'd an Entrance to Divine Grace, which enabled them to undertake Noble Actions for their God. 'Tis needless to mention her Angelical Purity; the flowing *Fountain* seems to denote that she would have parted with Streams of Blood, rather than to have consented to One single Thought to the prejudice of her consecrated Virginity.

'Twas observ'd that when she exhorted her *Religious*, a
Depth

Depth of Heavenly Wisdom appear'd in her Words, which inflam'd her Hearers with the Love of *Jesus*. She was favour'd with a special Gift of discovering Temptations, and of applying proper Remedies to defeat the Enemy. Not only the *Laity*, but even *Religious Men* and *Prelates*, found great advantage by conferring with her. Many resorted to *Guitherin* from all Parts of the Province: What is yet more, notorious *Thieves* and inveterate Malefactors were reclaimed from their Evil Courses by her powerful Advice and irresistible Remonstrances.

Almighty GOD was pleas'd to declare by Signs and Miracles, how much Saint *Wenefride*

Saint Wenefride. 89

fride was in His divine favour. Scarce any Day passed, wherein by sudden Cures of desperate Distempers, she did not comfort drooping and desponding *Patients*. Her *Monastery* resembled a Common Refuge of the Distress'd, and she was like a Tender *Mother* to the Unfortunate. Her Heroical Vertues were the Universal Subject of Discourse in Private Families, and the Fame of her Miracles was heard from the Pulpits in Churches. St. *Elerius*, who was best acquainted with her Merits, declar'd openly, That *Providence* had directed her to *Guitherin*, to honour and benefit them all: But from Humane Applause, which was abhorr'd by her to
the

the last degree, she was invited by a Revelation, to the Immortal Glory of *Angels*.

The *Saint* being thus forewarn'd of her long wish'd for Departure, the welcome News, for whole Days and Nights, threw her into *Extasies* of Joy. She had made it her study to forget, as much as possible, what she had done or suffer'd for her Dear Lord; and therefore, as one who is to undertake a long Journey, she made necessary provisions, as if nothing had been perform'd during the Course of her Holy Life. She redoubled her Fasts and other Austerities; she fatigued herself in the painful Exercises of continual Charity towards her *Sisters* and others. Notwithstanding

Saint Wenefride. 91

Notwithstanding her Angelical Interior, and the uninterrupted Union with her Divine Spouse, she vilify'd herself, as one not worthy of His Presence. That she might not surprise the Community, by her leaving them in a short Sickness, she imparted first to Saint *Elerius* the Summons she had receiv'd from her Redeemer, and the same afterwards to her dear Sisters, whose Sorrow was little inferior to those Transports of Jubilee she was absorp'd in, by the certain Assurance of passing speedily to her Lord and Master. They wept, they mourned, but she thus comforted them.

Weep

Weep not, Dear Children, but conform your Wills to your Creator's Pleasure. Doubt not but that in Heaven (whither thro' the Mercies of God I am going) I shall be more serviceable to you by my Prayers, than here on Earth by my Presence. For that Land of Promise is not a Place of Ignorance but of clear Knowledge, where the Blessed understand the Wants of their Friends on Earth; and they being united to the Fountain Head of Infinite Charity, they are powerful and ready to procure speedy Helps to succour them. This I promise to do for you, My dear Children, after that Christ shall have taken me into His Kingdom. You must not be contristated like those who have no hope. To wicked Worldlings, who by
their

Saint Wenefride. 93

their sinful Lives dread the Sight of a Terrible Judge, Death appears like a cruel Executioner, to drag them to a formidable Tribunal; but to Innocent and Holy Souls Death is entertain'd as a welcome Guest; he finds them ready to embrace him with Joy: They are like to Men expecting their Lord, when he returns from the Marriage, and are ready to go with him, as through God's Mercy, I hope that I am prepar'd at present for the Heavenly Journey, to enter into the Joys of my Lord.*

Her concluding Sickneſs took its beginning from frequent and violent Convulſions, which ſhe endur'd with unparell'd Patience. The lively Hopes of ſeeing her Heavenly Spouſe,

* St. Luke, xii. 36.

Spouse, sweeten'd all her acute Pains: Yet knowing that the crafty *Tempter* is more furious in the decisive Conflict, she earnestly and often besought our *Lord*, that He would not permit the *Infernal Enemy* to be frightful unto her in her Last Agony. She exhorted all who came to visit her, to make early preparations against that dreadful Hour, on which depended Eternal Happiness, or Never Ending Misery.

In the Beginning of *November* finding her Strength exhausted, and that her Dissolution was near at hand, she call'd for the *Saint* her Confessor, and was by him fortify'd with the *Holy Sacraments* of the Church. Beholding the *Religious*

Saint Wenefride. 95

gious in tears upon their Knees,
he said; *Dear Children*, rather
congratulate with me, than grieve
so much at my approaching Hap-
piness. I hope 'ere long to enjoy
Him in Heaven, Whom I have
ardently loved upon Earth. Pre-
serve inviolably the Promise you
have made Him: Undervalue the
base and sordid Pleasures of this
transitory World: Reflect that
your Bodies, altho' beautiful and
and in their prime, are no other
than loathsome-Prisons, which de-
tain your Immortal Souls in close
Confinement. Take great heed
not to defile them, and never for-
get this important Lesson, That
the Heavenly Comfort and Joy,
which pure Souls experience on their
Death Bed, recompences abun-
dantly all Worldly Riches, Plea-
sures,

tures, and Honors, which they have despis'd and abandon'd for the Service and Love of Jesus Christ.

The Saint, as it were, knowing the very Minute of her Departure, took her Last Leave and Blessing of Holy *Elerius*, hoping that they wou'd meet soon in Heaven, without any Fear of a Future Separation. She humbly requested that her Body might be bury'd near unto *Theonia's*, her Holy Mother. Then in a pure Act of intense Love of God, on the Third of *November*, she breath'd out her thrice happy Soul into her Blessed Redeemer's hands.

Elerius observing that she had expir'd, as the *Religious* also did, who were kneeling
near

Saint Wenefride. 97

near her Bed; the many deep Sighs publish'd their Loss. The Holy Abbot found himself oblig'd to suppress his own Grief, that he might more effectually comfort them, by declaring that she was only removed to Heaven before them, and that they ought to prepare to follow after her: That she was united gloriously to her God, and by her Prayers would powerfully assist them. Her Body was very little alter'd in the Comeliness of it, by her Death; and as she had desir'd, 'twas solemnly interr'd near *Theonia's*, and many other *Saints* bury'd before her in that Place: Amongst the rest were *Cheb* and *Sennan*, the one lying at her Head, and the

F other

other by her Side. Both these were renown'd for Sanctity and Miracles, and had Churches rais'd to their Memories. Yet altho' these Two, and many other *Saints* Bodies, which had been committed to that Holy Ground, drew thither Devout People; yet the Place was mostly revered and honor'd for Saint *Wenefride's* Sepulcher, which was afterwards favour'd by a Train of evident Miracles. Not long after, Saint *Elerius*, by a happy Death, finish'd his Course, and went to receive the Eternal Reward of his Apostolical Labours. His Body was interr'd in a Church erected to his Name and Memory, where it pleas'd Almighty God to
work

Saint Wenefride. 99

work Miraculous Cures, in testimony of his Sanctity on Earth, and Power by his Prayers in Heaven.

The *Omnipotent*, Who has assur'd Mortals by His Divine Promise, That *those who glorify Him, He will glorify them* *, most eminently fulfill'd the same in Saint *Wenefride*, both Living and Dead. She glorify'd her Creator in her tender Years, by consecrating unto Him her unspotted Virginity. She glorify'd Him, like Saint *Agatha* and Saint *Agnes*, with the cheerful Offering of her Head, to preserve untainted Fidelity to her Heavenly Spouse. She glorify'd Him, by withdrawing noble *Virgins*

F 2

from

* 1 Reg. ii. 30.

from the prevaricating World, and raising their Souls to the pure Love of *God*; instructing them in the true Spirit of Humility and Mortification. In fine she glorify'd Him thro' the whole course of her Life, in all points of Religious Perfection, not only relating to her Subjects, but even the *Laity*. On the other hand the *Almighty* has glorify'd her, down to the Present Age, from the Year Six Hundred and Sixty. According to Saint *Beuno's* Prediction, there has been no Cessation of Miracles; testifying her signal Sanctity, and how dear her precious Soul is to her *Maker*. 'Tis true, this humble Virgin was accustom'd to blush and to shed tears, at the

First

Saint Wenefride. 101

First Sound of her Praises, and therefore desir'd and obtain'd that she might absent her self from *Finhon*, to live in obscurity (as she resolv'd) out of the frothy Noise of Acclamations, which she could not avoid at the Place of her Martyrdom. This was her Pious Contrivance, but the Design of Heaven was to glorify her at *Guthelin*. As God commanded a Torrent to flow in that *Dry Valley*, where her Bloody Head touch'd first the Ground, so at her Sepulcher He did not reject or refuse any Petition, made by her devoted Suppliants.

The Historians of her Life, Saint *Elerius* and *Salopiensis*, concluded that it would be an

Undertaking to swell Volumes, if they register'd all Wonders done at her *Shrine* and *Fountain*: They thought it sufficient to acquaint the *Reader*, that the *Blind*, *Lepers*, and other *Diseas'd* Persons, were perfectly cured, by drinking the *Water*, or bathing themselves in the *Holy Well*. This became so famous, that tender *Mothers* made no difficulty of casting their Sickly Children into the Stream; which was a speedy Cure. Such as liv'd at great distance, and were tormented with Agues or Hot Burning Fevers, caused the Water to be brought to them, and drank of it, as a certain Remedy to relieve them in their Maladies. Those

Saint Wenefride. 103

in very Remote Places, us'd to put One of the Little *Bloody Stones* which was taken out of the *Well*, into other Spring Water, and they were cured. 'Tis said that the *Virgin Martyr* herself prescrib'd the First Use of this Last Remedy, who soon after her Second Death appearing to many, who in dangerous Distempers devoutly call'd upon her, she directed them, for their speedy recovery, to apply the Water and Stones of the *Well* in the afore-said manner. Such as had Swellings, or Old Sores, bathed the Part affected, and they found present relief.

At this wonderful *Spring* almost daily Miracles were wrought, according to a Petition

tion she made to *God* before she left *Finhon*; That He would vouchsafe to bless Corporally, and sanctify Spiritually, all those who in Future Ages, should devoutly visit her *Fountain*, and there acknowledge the many Benefits with which He had favour'd her. Frequent Miracles were likewise wrought at her *Tomb*. Multitudes of Diseas'd Persons became perfectly cured, by praying, and kissing the Earth, where the Sacred *Remainder* of her was deposited.

The Holy Author of Saint *Wenefride's* Life and Death, was not satisfy'd with a General Relation of Miraculous Cures: He descends to Particulars, that Unbelieving Posterity

Saint Wenefride. 105

sterity might be induced to allow credit to what he had recorded as to *daily Wonders*. I touch two or three with Brevity. *From the Beginning of the World it hath not been heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one born blind, unless this Man were of God* *. This declar'd the Omnipotence of the Long Expected *Messias*; and the like Favour soon after *our Saint's* Death, gave wing to the Fame of her Sanctity, and Power in Heaven, and spread the same thro' the *Western* Provinces of *Britain*. A poor Carpenter, dwelling not far from *St. Wenefride's* Well, had a Daughter born blind. She growing up, and groaning under that Temporal
F 5 Misfortune,

* *St. John ix. 32.*

Misfortune, hearing the Report of many Miraculous Cures wrought at that *Fountain*, she importun'd her Father daily, to be handed thither. This was granted; and being come to the Place, she bathed her Head in the Water, and was afterwards conducted to the *Chappel*, near unto the *Well*. She spent that whole Night in Prayer, beseeching God, thro' the Merits and Intercession of Saint *Wenefride*, who was *Martyr'd* for His love, to bestow upon her Corporal Sight, to the end she might serve Him better, and be an *Eye Witness* of the Wonders wrought in that Place. Towards Morning she fell into a Slumber; and when she open'd

Saint Wenefride. 107

open'd her Eye Lids, she found herself bless'd with perfect Sight. This being so notorious and publick, begat fresh Veneration to the *Holy Well*, and was divulged far and near, to His Honor, Who is glorify'd in His *Saints*.

The *Saint's* Privilege was not confin'd to her *Well* and Chappel; the adjacent Places were a sort of Sanctuary, under her Protection: Witness what happen'd to some Thieves, who stole a Cow, out of a Pasture near unto St. *Wenefride's* Chappel. The Robbers forc'd her over Rocky Ways, that they might not be traced; but it happen'd otherwise: For the Cow fix'd not one Step, without leaving a deep Impression.

Impression in the Stones, as if she had been passing thro' soft Clay. The Footsteps also of the Thieves so visibly appear'd, that the Owner next Morning missing his Beast, he and his Neighbours follow'd after by the Miraculous Track. The Robbers perceiving them near at hand, made the best of their way to escape, and left the Booty to whom it belonged. They afterwards observ'd at leisure, how the Cow had left the clear Prints of her Feet as she was carry'd off, but not the least Impression after she was retriev'd and return'd homewards. Great Crowds of People flock'd to behold the said Prints in the Stones, and publish'd the Miracle.

Saint Wenefride. 109

racle. The Thieves themselves, apprehending lest some severe Judgment should befall them, to terrify others, came penitently to the *Martyr's* Altar: They confess'd their Sin, and warn'd all not to commit the like Trespafs.

Behold a following Example yet more terrifying. A Messenger being dispatch'd by a Chief *Lord* of that Country, to give his Neighbors timely notice of some approaching Danger from the Bordering *Saxons* (who continually carry'd on War against them) was way-laid by Thieves, and pursued to Saint *Wenefride's* Church, whither he fled, as to a safe Sanctuary. The *Express* fasten'd

fasten'd his Horse near unto the Door, which they took away, not presuming to pursue him to the *Altar*, where he stood for refuge. After their Departure the Messenger came forth, and finding that the Horse was carry'd off, he return'd into the Church, and prostrate, made a pious complaint before the *Saints Altar*; that he indeed had sustain'd a considerable Loss, but 'twas she who was highly injur'd: That the *Authors* of the Crime deserv'd Exemplar Punishment, to the end others might be deterr'd from violating the Safety of her Sanctuary, and the Reverence due unto it. His Remonstrance was accepted of by Divine Justice; for the

Saint Wenefride. III

the *Thief* who had unty'd the Horse, and had him in actual Possession, was suddenly seized all over his Body with such Extremity of Pains that he often call'd on Death, to deliver him from the Torture. After a few Days, his Right Arm (which was the Instrument of his Sin) began to swell, then to putrify, and rot in a loathsome manner. This Tribulation gave Understanding to him, who had neglected Conscience in time of Health. Wherefore, he came to her Church, and begged with many Tears, the *Saint's* pardon for his Insolence, and the wrong he had done her. He became a true *Penitent*, and this Humiliation so much deserv'd

deserv'd her Favour, that by degrees he was cured of his painful Ulcer. He prais'd God for His Mercy, and Saint *Wenefride* for her Compassion, preaching to others not to offend against the Sanctity of the Place, nor to give disturbance to the *Saint's* Clients, who in Distresses run unto her for Succor.

Take another Instance, in a Passage which may seem of less moment. A *Labourer* presum'd to cut off for his own use, a Bough from an Old Oak growing near unto *Guitherin* Church-door, which afforded a convenient Shade to Devout *Pilgrims*, when the Concourse was so great, that they were forced to remain without, and
to

Saint Wenefride. 113

to pray under it. No sooner had he struck his Hatchet into the Bough, than 'twas immoveably fix'd there; and as *Jeroboam's* Hand wither'd, which he had stretch'd forth, to order the Apprehension of the Man of God, *that he was not able to draw it back* *; so this poor Man's Hand and Arm cleav'd so fast to the Handle of the Ax, that with all his Strength he was not able to separate them. He attempted often in vain to let go his hold, and finding himself in that surprising Distress, he cry'd out for Help and Assistance. Some Persons hard by heard his mournful Voice, and ran to the Place, admiring at the Wonder. They

They exhorted him to repent, and to beg the *Saint's* Pardon and Prayers, which he did, and at the same time they all cry'd out, *Holy Wenefride, take pity on him!* At these Words, his Hand and Arm were set at liberty, and were restor'd to their former Freedom. The Cut in the Branch was shewed to *Robert*, Prior of *Shrewsbury*, when he came to translate her Sacred Reliques, of which I am going to give an account, with the occasion of the Removal.

In the Reign of King *William* the Conqueror, a Chief Earl of his Court, call'd *Roger*, built a sumptuous Monastery in *Shrewsbury*, to the Glory of God and the Benefit of that City,

Saint Wenefride. 115

City, endowing the same with sufficient Revenues. An *Abbot* and his Monks being therein settled, they began to lament the Want of Holy *Reliques* in their New Church, which *Wales* was stor'd with most abundantly, by reason that many Eminent *Saints* of Both Sexes, had formerly flourish'd in those Parts, renown'd for Sanctity and the Grace of Miracles. Hereupon they began to consider and consult, what *Saint's* Body might be obtain'd by them, to bring a Blessing upon the *Religious* Family. During this Deliberation, a *Monk* of their Monastery fell dangerously sick, and moreover was so distracted in mind, that his Brethren both
in

116 *The Life of*

in *Shrewsbury* and *Chester*, ceased not to recommend to *Almighty God* his Recovery. One Day, when the Vertuous *Sub-Prior* of *Chester-Abbey*, had ended his Prayer for the miserable Creature, he dropp'd into an unusual Sleep; to whom a Woman appear'd in Glorious Attire, and said; *If you desire the Sick Man's Health, let one of you go, and offer for him a Mass, in the Chappel near unto Saint Wenefride's Well, and he will presently recover: After which she vanish'd out of his Sight.*

The *Sub-Prior Radulphus* (that was his Name) awak'd in great Amazement, but was backward in saying one Word of the Vision, fearing that it would not find any credit.
But

Saint Wenefride. 117

But when he heard that his *Brother's* Distemper grew more desperate, Charity oblig'd him to declare what he had seen. All the *Religious* were of opinion, that Saint *Wenefride* herself had given these directions. Wherefore they immediately dispatch'd away, Two of their Company; who celebrated Holy *Mass* in her Chappel, and at that very time, as it was calculated, the *Shrewsbury* Monk was restor'd to perfect Health. On this account both he and the other *Monks* became more tenderly devoted to the *Virgin-Martyr*.

Robertus Salopiensis spends Seven Chapters, in relating what methods were taken, that happy Success might answer

answer their zealous Intention. I Epitomise, yet will not omit any thing, which appears to me very material. The *Abbot* and Monks of *Shrewsbury* persisted with great Constancy many Years, in their earnest Desires and fervorous Prayers, to obtain the Treasure of Saint *Wenefride's* Sacred Reliques. In the Reign of King *Henry* the First, a Grant was given of them, but by reason of many Commotions, after the King's Death in that Country, the Business was not effected till the Second Year of K. *Stephen's* Reign; when *Abbot Herbert* in a Consult with his Monks, deputed *Robert* his Prior, and *Richard*, an eminent Monk of the same Monastery, to pass
into

Saint Wenefride. 119

into *Wales*, to bring back with them the *Reliques*. To facilitate the Matter, before their Departure several Letters were transmitted to Friends in those Parts. They visited in their Journey the Bishop of *Bangor*, and were directed by him to a Principal *Lord*, who ruled in that Country where the Blessed Body was kept. The Nobleman understanding the cause of their coming, entertain'd them courteously, and said; That doubtless GOD and the Holy MARTYR has sent you to translate her Body, to a Place where 'twill be more honour'd. I not only give my consent, but I will send also my Servants to assist you. Were not I unavoidably detain'd by Business
of

of Importance, I would presume to go with you in person, and with my unworthy hands, I would deliver unto you those Sacred Pledges of Sanctity.

This gracious Speech cheer'd up the sollicitous Travellers, who were Seven in Number, viz. The Two Priors of *Shrewsbury* and *Chester*; *Richard* the Monk; a Godly Priest born in that Country, and Three Attendants. They set forward towards the Saint's Sepulcher, and being come near unto *Guitherin*, they met a Man, who cast them into dejection, but not into despair of Success. He acquainted them in plain and positive Terms, that the Inhabitants having intelligence of their Coming,
and

Saint Wenefride. 121

and of their Intentions, were absolutely resolv'd to oppose them: That no Favour, nor Power of any Mortal, should prevail with them to permit their Chief *Saint's* Body, Patroness of their Country, to be carry'd away by Strangers.

These few Words did so much dispirit them, that it seem'd necessary to have Encouragement from Heaven. *Prior Robert* lay conceal'd in a Farmer's House, and sent the *Chester Prior* and the other *Priest* to *Guitherin*, they being Men of Birth, and well known in that Country. *Robert* rising up at his usual time to say *Mattins*, was certify'd by a Devout Man, who was one of his Company, how that

G

Night

Night a glorious *Virgin* had appear'd unto him, and had order'd him to acquaint the anxious *Prior*, that he should prosperously effect the Affair he came about, and by her means, whose Honor he had espous'd. *Robert*, something comforted with this Relation, after finishing Mattins fell into a Slumber, and seem'd to see a former Holy *Abbot* of his own Monastery, call'd *Godfrey*, who thus reviv'd him; Banish Fear, Brother Robert, of failing in your Design. Be of good heart; for by God's Assistance we shall defeat those who oppose us, and we shall obtain what for many Years we have earnestly desir'd. This was more than sufficient to animate him in the prosecution

Saint Wenefride. 123

tion of his Journey, especially the other *Prior* having sent an Express to hasten them forward, because God had prosper'd their Undertaking.

Being arriv'd early in the Morning at *Guitherin* Church, and having prayed some time before her Body, the Chief *Priest* of the Parish came unto them, who kindly saluted them. They humbly begg'd his charitable Assistance, of obtaining the *Saint's* Holy Reliques, which he easily granted them, as knowing before they came, the Will of God. For (said he) on Easter Eve Last, I had a Vision in this very Place. Composing my self to rest, a Beautiful Young Man appear'd unto me, commanding me to arise.

I answer'd, that 'twas not yet the Hour for Mattins; so he left me. Returning the second time, when I was more oppress'd with Sleep, he bid me rise, as before he had done; but being very heavy, I reply'd that I would rise in due time; and covering my Head with my Cloak, I return'd to Sleep. In the Third Visit, he pull'd away my Cloak with Violence, ordering me to follow him without Delay, as I did, very much affrighted. He led me to the Saint's Shrine, and pointing at it with his Finger, said, Note well this Place, and also my Words. I do command thee, that if some Months hence, Persons come to open this Sepulcher, and to carry away with them the Saint's Body, that thou hind

Saint Wenefride. 125

der-them not in their Holy Design, but assist them to the utmost of thy power; lest by resisting, thou be punish'd (as I foretel thee) for thy Disobedience, by some *irremediable Sickness*. *After this the Angel vanish'd away.*

The Good *Pastor* was not wanting to his intimated Duty. He disposed the Owners of the Village to acquiesce in the Will of God, and order'd the Parishioners to repair to the Church. Prior *Robert* seeing such a numerous Assembly, spoke unto them by an Interpreter, in this manner; *I and my Companions are come hither by Divine Appointment, to obtain of you Saint Wenefride's Body, that it may be honour'd in our City*

and Monastery, Both which are much devoted unto her. The Virgin her self (as your Pastor here present knows) hath by Visions manifested her Will; and she cannot but be displeased with those, who are so bold as to contradict what she desires should be done.

Great attention was given to what he said, and they seem'd much inclin'd to grant the Pious Request; One Man only oppos'd the Motion, and with a clamorous Voice declar'd, That they should never be depriv'd, by his Consent, of so great a Treasure: that the Saint had lived holily, and departed in that Place; her Reliques were now honour'd by them, as they had been by their *Ancestors*, and that Al-
mighty

Saint Wenefride. 127

mighty God had approv'd of the Peoples Devotion at her Shrine, by frequent Miracles. This Man was of an avaritious Temper, and mov'd to be so violent, not out of a Motive of Piety, but Lucre. However after many Consultations, at last, they all unanimously consented, that *Saint Wenefride's* Body should be deliver'd to the Monks, to be translated to *Shrewsbury*.

The Prior, and his Companions, return'd their most humble thanks, and without loosing time, desir'd to enter the *Holy Isle*, where the *Saint's* Shrine had been visited for many Ages, by devout Pilgrims. Robert with his Company being come before the

Sacred Reliques, sung joyfully to Almighty God Psalms of Thanksgiving. They wrapp'd up decently her Bones in the Finest Linnen, which was brought by them on that account; and after a Repetition of grateful Expressions to the *Pastor* and to the Inhabitants, they proceeded that Night towards *Shropshire*. In the way homeward they cured a Sick Man, who was tortur'd with a violent Distemper, by putting into Water a little of the Earth found in Saint *Wenefride's* Head, and causing him to drink of it. This evident Miracle increased Veneration to those Sacred Reliques.

Prior Robert gave timely notice to his *Abbot*, that they were

Saint Wenefride. 129

were near at hand with the desired Treasure, and he receiv'd orders to deposite the same in *Saint Giles's Church*, which stood near unto the Gate of the City, to the end that the Body might be brought to the Monastery in greater Splendor, by a solemn Procession of the *Bishop, Clergy, and People*. During its stay there, *Monks* were appointed by turns, to pray Day and Night before the *Altar*, on which the *Virgin's Bones* were exposed. Multitudes of the Citizens of *Shrewsbury* join'd with them in prayer, and mutually congratulated each other for the happiness of so potent a Patroness. *Saint Wenefride* was not backward in re-

G 5 quitting

quitting this devout Entertainment, shewing by several Miracles, how acceptable the same was unto her. The Following one is very remarkable.

A Young Man had lain long in a miserable Condition ; for his Limbs were so contracted, that he could not point a Foot, and his Head so much settled downwards towards his Knees, that he could not force it upwards, to lift an Eye to Heaven. He desir'd to be carry'd to Saint *Giles's* Church, and to be set down before the *Altar*, on which stood the Sacred Reliques. He spent that Night in Prayer, begging of God, by the Merits and Intercession of Saint *Wenefride*, that he
might

Saint Wenefride. 131

might be heal'd. Towards Morning he dropp'd into a Slumber, and before the *Priest* came to celebrate the First Mass, he awak'd, and found himself perfectly cured. This astonish'd the whole City, seeing him to walk as readily as any of the Inhabitants.

A Day being appointed by the *Bishop*, to convey the Sacred Reliques from St. *Giles's* Church to the Monastery; notice was given both to Town and Country, and withal, that such who assisted, or were present at the Procession, would not only receive the *Bishop's* Blessing, but also would gain *Indulgences*, granted on the account of the Solemnity. The Universal Fame of Miracles, and

and Saint *Wenefride's* Sanctity, drew together a Throng of People, who appear'd in their Best Apparel to honour that joyful Day. A little before the Proceffional March, the Sky frown'd with dark heavy Clouds, and threaten'd immediate Rain: This Storm, ready to fall, contristated very much all devoted to the *Saint*, as foreseeing that many would withdraw themselves. The *Clergy* and *Monks* besought earnestly the *Omnipotent Disposer* of all Times and Seasons, that He would please to grant Dry Weather, for His own Honour, and of His *Spouse*, and for the Consolation of the Congregated People, at least until

Saint Wenefride. 133

until the Proceſſion was ended. Their Prayers were heard ſo effectually, that altho' violent Showers power'd down in other Parts of the City, and adjacent Fields, not One ſingle Drop fell into any Street through which the Bleſſed Body was to paſs. The thick Clouds hover'd, and hung over their Heads, as gather'd on purpoſe to bring Saint *Wenefride* miraculoſly, to her New Poſſeſſion of the Holy *Benedictin* Monastery.

The Streets were lin'd with an incredible Concourse of Devout People, who on their Knees ſhed Tears of Joy as the Body paſſed by, for ſo great a Bleſſing. Theſe were the tender Showers, which fell
in.

in those Streets, excepted by Heaven from Rain. The *Bishop* and *Priests*, brought the *Reliques* to the Monastery, which were reverently receiv'd from them by the *Abbot* and his *Monks*, as inestimable Jewels. They were magnificently plac'd upon the High *Altar*, which was dedicated to the Holy Apostles *Saint Peter* and *Saint Paul*, where many Miracles were wrought for the help and benefit of Souls and Bodies. *The Name of God be prais'd for ever and ever.*

Hitherto I have follow'd *Robertus Salopiensis*, who translated *Saint Wenefride's* Body from *Guitherin* to *Shrewsbury*, in the Year of our Redemption, Eleven

Saint Wenefride. 135
Eleven Hundred, Thirty, and
Eight.

Not only this City, but
likewise other Parts of *Great
Britain* became most tenderly
devoted to the Holy Virgin-
Martyr, which induced *Henry*
Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, in
a Provincial Synod in 1420, to
appoint the Feast of Saint *We-
nefride* to be solemnly kept all
over *England* with an Office
of Nine Lessons on the Third
Day of *November* *.

Tis astonishing, and like-
wise deplorable, to hear some
Persons decrying Miracles, and
ridiculing them with so great
boldness, and Contempt, that
in despite of Holy *Doctors* of
the

* *Lindewode, Fol. 76. Alford. Anno.*
1138.

the Church, and Religious Writers, they represent *Jesus Christ* as One Unfaithful to His Solemn Promise to Future Ages, and they obstinately maintain, that all Miracles had a full period after the Apostles Preaching. They assent without Hesitation to Pagan *Plutarch*, *Tacitus*, or *Suetonius*, but demurr, and doubt of the Authority of that Eminent Saint and Learned Doctor, Saint *John Chrysostome*, who wrote a whole Book on the Subject of Miracles *; whence he infers, against the wilful *Heathens*, that *Christ* is *God*, Who works such Wonders by the dry Ashes of His Followers. The Miracles register'd by *St. Augustin*,
in

* *Lib. de Babyla, M.*

Saint Wenefride. 137

his Book *of the City of God*; those of *Venerable Bede* in his Ecclesiastical History; what *St. Jerome* says of *Saint Paul* the First Hermit, and *Saint Hilarion*; and *Saint Gregory* the Great in his Dialogues, are Matter of Mirth to these profane Drolls. They don't attend what Master they seek to please, by imitating the obdurate *Jews*, who, to discredit the Miracles of the *Son of God*, gave them a malicious turn, saying, *In Beelzebub Prince of Devils, He casts out Devils**.

Our invincible *Heroine*, the Glorious *Virgin-Martyr*, *Saint Wenefride*, has not met with kinder quarter: For after the Plunder of her rich *Shrine*,
and

* *St. Luke*, xi. 15.

and the Scattering of her Blessed Bones, her admirable Life must be list'd with the *Monkish Legends*; her evident Miracles are Fabulous Narratives; and the stupendious Cures wrought at her *Well*, are nothing else but the experienc'd Effects of a *Cold Bath*. To the greater Honor of *God*, Who has honor'd this *Saint* to a wonderful degree, I will instance a few Late Miracles, and refer it to the *truly Christian* Reader, whether the Watry Element could influence such uncommon Changes. I will not travail further back than the Last Age, lest it be objected, that many things are asserted, happening long ago, which may rationally be believ'd, but cannot

Saint Wenefride. 139

cannot be disproved. The Original Attestations at this moment lie before me; and where I do not abbreviate (some Cures being worded after a prolix manner, as to Circumstances) I will deliver what I offer, in the very Expressions of the Authentick Records. They are taken from Eye-Witnesses, who were Persons of tender Conscience and nice Honor, sometimes given in under their own Hand-Writing.

In the Year of our *Lord God* One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Six, *Sir Roger Bodenham*, Knight of the Honorable Order of the *Bath*, after a tedious Quartan Ague, had a gross Humor settled in his Legs, which soon after broke out into
an

an apparent *Leprosy*. He made use of many Able Physicians, but depended most on Doctor *John David Rhes*, a *Cambro-Britain*, who commenced Doctor at *Sienna*, profess'd Physick at *Padua*, was Practitioner in divers Parts of *Italy*, and afterwards in *England*. He was near Sixty Years of Age when Sir *Roger* consulted him. This Learned Man ran thro' all Remedies that Concern could suggest, or Art devise, without any Success or Ease to the Knight. He therefore advised him to lay the Case before the College of Physicians in *London*, which was stated very faithfully and learnedly by the aforesaid *Rhes*, and was carry'd up by Mr. *Thomas Beale*,
Steward

Saint Wenefride. 141

Steward of Sir *Roger's* Courts. The College at *London* being conven'd, the Case was read and debated, as also the Practice and Prescriptions of Doctor *Rhes*, which *Beale* deliver'd to them in Writing. They wrote back to Sir *Roger* their Opinion, that his *Physician* had hit right on his Disease, and had apply'd proper Remedies for a Cure, that he was a Person so eminently Learned, that they acknowledg'd themselves his Inferiors, he having been *Reader* to most of them; and if the Method he took, had no effect, there was *not in nature any Cure for him*. The Knight found not any satisfaction by the Answer, which was penned to the Commendation of
of

of his Physician. Doctor *Rhes* being a *Roman Catholick*, advised his Patient to remove to Saint *Wenefride's* Well, to try, whether by the *Saint's* Intercession, he might not obtain a Cure, which was not in the power of Art to effect. He acquainted him with the Holiness of the Place, and what Miraculous Favors were there obtain'd. Sir *Roger*, extremely desirous of Health, obey'd his Physician, and undertook a painful Journey, full Seventy Eight *British* Miles, from *Rotherwas* to *Holy Well*. He bathed himself in the Miraculous *Fountain*, and became as sound and clean from all Scurf and Leprosy, as a Child newly born, and afterwards continued so. This
happen'd

Saint Wenefride. 143

happen'd providentially ; for as *Naaman*, Captain General of *Syria*, was directed to wash in the River *Jordan*, which completed a Twofold Cure, of his Soul as well as of his Body *. In like manner the *Leper*, Sir *Roger*, came to wash in the Stream of *Holy Well* : He was not at that time a *Catholic* ; but the Miraculous Cure, with other Motives of Credibility, induced him to embrace the True Faith, and he was reconciled to the Church of *Christ* ; he rendred thanks and praises to Almighty *God*, for both these Favors. Besides this relation, which Sir *Roger* gave to the Lady his Wife, and to his Daughter in Law,

* 4 Kings, v.

Law, Wife to his Eldest Son, Mrs. *Mary Bodenham*: There were other Witnesses, the aforesaid *Thomas Beale*, *William Green* and his Wife, *Richard Bray*, *John Henley*, and many more *Attendants* on Sir *Roger Bodenham*.

The *Omnipotent* is more glorify'd in His *Saints*, by attributing Supernatural Effects to their humble Petitions before His Sacred Throne, than to Natural Causes. Some Unbelievers (if H. Scripture had not declar'd otherwise) might ascribe the Wholesomeness of the Waters of *Jericho*, to an Occult, Sudden, and Subterraneous Quality and Alteration, rather than to the Prophet *Elisha*'s Miracle, by casting Salt
into

Saint Wenefride. 145

into the *Fountain* *. Worshippers of the Great God have different Sentiments, as will appear by the following Relation. In the Month of *December*, and the Year of our Lord, One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Thirty Seven, Mrs. *Jane Wakeman*, Wife to Mr. *John Wakeman*, of *Rougley*, in the Parish of *Horsbarnham*, and the County of *Sussex*, was tormented with a Sore Breast; and having used all probable means for a Cure, she found no ease or prospect of growing better. The Ablest Surgeons concluded, that unless her Breast was cut off, there was not any other way to relieve her, neither would they by
H that

* 4 Reg. ii. 19.

that Operation give assurance of a Recovery, for they verily believ'd that her Breast was Incurable, and to attempt the Amputation might hasten on the Gentlewoman's Death. They declar'd this to her Friends, but encourag'd her with better Hopes. Mrs. *Wakeman* regarded not their Opinion, with which she was privately acquainted, but resolv'd to have recourse to Heaven, and to undertake a Pilgrimage to Saint *Wenefride's* Well in *Flintshire*. She began her journey from *London* in the Month of *June*, One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Thirty Eight, accompany'd by her said Husband; Mr. *Richard Wakeman*, his Brother; and
one

Saint Wenefride. 147

one *Francis Nasb.* She had at that time Two great Holes in her Breast under the Left Pap, which were seen both by *Catholicks* and *Protestants*. When she came into *Worcestershire*, to a Place call'd *Beeley*, she left there behind her all her Salves and Ointments, having a strong Faith and Hopes in Almighty God's Mercy, and in the Prayers of Blessed Saint *Wenefride*, that she would not have any further occasion of using them. She only apply'd Clean Linnen, to keep her Breast sweet; for the Corruption burst out in so great quantities, that it forced its way thro' many Folds, and ran down into her very Shoes. Her Breast left off running at her First

Bathing in the *Holy Well*: She stayed One Night only in that Town, but went thrice into the *Fountain*; and from the very *Instant* of finishing her Devotions, to her Dying Day, which was Five Years after, she never found any pain in that Breast, nor any Sore, or Sign thereof, except a Little Seam, to shew the Place where the Two Holes were miraculously closed up. She bore afterwards Three Children, and in drying up her Milk, found that Breast least troublesome, which before had been ulcer'd. I have this Account in Mr. *Wakeman's* Hand Writing, which he gave, as a perpetual Testimony of the Favor, and also of the Passage which follows.

In

Saint Wenefride. 149

In the Year One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Thirty, the aforesaid Mr. *Wakeman* of *Rou-gley*, &c. being at *Holy Well*, saw a Man lying Dead, hard by the *Well* it self. This Profane Wretch, the Day before, had much derided and scoffed at Blessed Saint *Wenefride*, who suffer'd a glorious *Martyrdom* in defence of her Virginity: He also gave Abusive and *Uncivil* Language, in the presence of Mr. *Wakeman*, to the *Pilgrims* who came thither to perform their Devotions. The *Coroner* was call'd, a Jury impanell'd, and the Body was view'd. After mature Deliberation they gave in this Verdict; *That God's Just Judgment was the Cause of his Death, for his uncivil*

vil Carriage in that Place.
Thus Mr. *Wakeman* an Eye-
Witness. I could add here the
Names of such, who in the
Year One Thousand, Six Hun-
dred, and Thirty Seven, or-
der'd the Image of Saint *Wene-*
fride to be defaced, and the I-
ron Bars to be taken away,
which supported the Pious
Visitants in the rapid Stream;
how both he who commanded
it, and those who executed his
Orders, contrary to the persua-
sion of several moderate *Prote-*
stants, were shortly after ex-
emplarily punish'd by Uncom-
mon Misfortunes and Disa-
sters. Moreover, had I not
confin'd my self to the Last
Century, I could mention
Precedents, more than suffici-
ent,

Saint Wenefride. 151

ent, to caution Persons from being too forward in their Contempts of Saint *Wenefride* and her *Well*, which is sometimes severely taken notice of by Him, who has said, *He that touches you, toucheth the Apple of Mine Eye* *. But let us return from this Digression, if it may be call'd so.

The Infinite Wisdom of God thinks fit, not to work Miracles by the Intercession of His *Saints*, in all Places, nor towards all Persons, but as it pleaseth Him †. The greatest Wonders are wrought at Saint *Wenefride's Well*, but I relate here a Cure at a great distance, which tends much to the Glory of our *Saint*. In the Month

H 4 of

* Zach. ii. 8. † S. Aug. *Epist.* 137.

of *June*, and the Year of our Lord, One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Forty Seven, the *Wife* of *John Clee*, Gardiner in the Suburbs of the City of *Worcester*, being Diseased, undertook on foot a journey to *Holy Well*, hoping to find there the recovery of her Health. Passing thro' *Kidderminster*, in her way to *Flintshire*, she call'd at her Cousin *Anthony Cooke's* House. Having refresh'd herself, she acquainted her Cousin with the Occasion of this her *Pilgrimage*. The long Discourse on the Subject of *Holy Well*, was overheard by a Sick Woman, who lay in the Next Room. This poor Creature had continued Bedrid Six or Seven Years; she was always
Lame,

Saint Wenefride. 153

Lame, and had been put upon the said *Cook* (who was a Linnen Weaver) to be maintain'd at the Charge of the Parish. Just as the *Pilgrim* was taking leave, and ready to set forwards, the Bedrid Woman cry'd out to speak with her: The Business was this; She desir'd her for the Passion of *Christ*, to carry for her a Single Penny (which she gave her) to *Holy Well*, and to bestow it on the First Poor Body she there happen'd to meet, humbly desiring that Party to go into the Well for her, and to pray that she might have the use of her Limbs. This was promis'd and perform'd.

The Poor Widow's *Two Mites*, cast into the Treasury

of the Temple, were so acceptable to the Searcher of Hearts, that He declar'd *She had given more than all together* *. For it was her Whole Personal Estate. The opulent Scribes and Pharisees might sling in Handfuls of Gold, they found no want; this Poor Creature bestow'd on her God, what seem'd necessary to relieve her self, perchance she saying at the same time with a flaming Heart, *Lord ! If I was Mistress of the Two Worlds, as I am of these Two Mites, they should be employ'd to Your Honor.* S. Wenefride accepted the Single Penny sent to her Well, with so great Faith and Devotion; 'twas all the Bedrid Woman had to present her with.

Clec's

* Luke xxi. 3.

Saint Wenefride: 155

Clec's Wife having remain'd at her Journey's End Six or Seven Days, return'd homewards, and coming to *Kidderminster*, she call'd at her Cousin *Cooke's* House, where to her great astonishment, she saw the *Lame, Bedrid Woman*, perfectly recover'd, and inquiring at what time she became sound, 'twas computed, that on that Day, and the very Hour, when the *Single Penny* was deliver'd at *Holy Well*, the *Bedrid Woman* arose, walk'd round the House, and abroad, to the Admiration of the whole *Parish*. This Miraculous Change at so great distance, could not be the Product of a *Cold Bath*. This Passage was diligently examin'd by *Mr. James Bridges*, who

who had *Anthony Cooke* and *Clec's* Wife before him, who both attested the Truth of what is here related. In Testimony whereof *Mr. Bridges* recorded the same in his own Hand Writing. This was the worthy Gentleman, who being *Sheriff* of *Worcester* proclaim'd there the King in the Year 1651, for which he suffer'd much from the Rebels, and with difficulty escaped the Gallows.

A languishing Patient, perplexes the Physician, and Distempers radicared from Infancy, causes him to fling aside his Books, and to dismiss the hopes of a Cure. This seem'd the Case of *Mrs. Mary Numan*, Wife of *Mr. Hugh Numan*,

Saint Wenefride. 157

man, who was Clerk to Sir *Jeremy Smith*, then Captain of one of His *Majesty's* Men of War. At Five Years of age, by an Ague and Fever, she was reduced to that Lameness and Impotence, that for the term of Eighteen Years she was not able to stand or point a Foot to the Ground: Her Arm Bones were so much out of their natural places, that one reach'd over, and interfer'd with the other, and the Bones of her Legs were so dislocated, that they extended some Inches behind those of the Thighs. Being in this miserable condition, and having considerable Friends at *Court*, she made her application and address unto them. By their Interest, she had

had the opinion of all the *King's* Physicians, who declar'd, that naturally *she was Incurable*. Hereupon she was touch'd by the *King*, but it pleas'd God not to restore her to Health. She was Two Summers and One Winter at the *Bath* in *Sommerfetshire*, and at other Places in *England* Famous for Cures, as also at Three *Wells* in *Scotland*; altho' she could not make any other shift for her self, than with great Difficulty and Pain, to crawl a little upon her Knees. She was carry'd into *France*, and was put thrice into the Second Grape-Prefs, in divers Parts of that Kingdom. She was touch'd at *Paris* by the *French King*: In *Flanders* she visited

Saint Wenefride. 159

sited *Sichem* and other Places of Devotion; she was Eighteen Weeks at *Aquisgrane*: In *Holland* she had the Advice of an *Italian* Prince, Famous for his Skill in Physick. To be brief, she was conducted to the Baths in *Portugal*; all which Journeys were for the most part at the *King of England's* Expence, but not to any Effect or Alteration in the Cripple. 'Tis true, she had been formerly twice at *Saint Wenefride's Well*, without any Amendment, yet had an earnest desire and strong impulse to make a *Third Pilgrimage*: She was comforted with these inviting Thoughts, both awake and sleeping. Wherefore, towards the Latter End of *May*,
in

in the Year, One Thousand, sand, Six Hundred, and Sixty Six, she began her Journey from *London*, and arriv'd at *Holy Well* on *Wednesday* in *Whitson* Week, being the Sixth Day of *June*, in the same Year. Going into the *Holy Fountain*, she immediately felt (with much Pain) her Bones to move, and draw to their right Places; so that by the Help of others, namely Mrs. Degg of *Wolverhampton* (who with Mr. *Paling* her Kinsman, and other Pilgrims of *Staffordshire*, were at that time in the *Well*) she was able to stand upon her Feet, which she had not done before (as is already said) for 18 Years, and to walk a little in the Water. On *Trinity Sunday* she

Saint Wenefride. 161

she went the fifth time into the *Well*, and afterwards walk'd without any Help of others, and on *Wednesday* following she undertook a journey towards *Ireland*. This Miracle was attested, with *all the recited Particulars*, by her self, in the presence of *John Hughes de Combe* and *Robert Price de Aelwyducha*, as Witnesses to her Subscription. If the *Cold Bath* had an occult vertue to restore her Limbs, it had been needless to return a third time, being the former Visits seem'd to be made in vain. She had heard of *Saint Beuno's* Prediction, concerning a Third Payment of Devotion at that Place, and complying, she was blessed with the surprising Cure.

On.

On the Fourth of *April*, One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Sixty Six, about Five of Clock in the Afternoon, *Hugh* the Son of *Thomas Williams*, of the Parish of *Whitford* in the County of *Flint* Yeoman, a Boy of Eight Years and Nine Months old, having a Body of just Proportion in each Part to the Height of his Stature, which was Four Foot, and playing with one of his School-fellows near the Mill, which stands but at a little distance from the Holy *Fountain*, he attempted to skip over the Water, but came short of the other Side, and dropp'd into the Current, where 'tis most impetuous, Three Yards from the Great Water-Wheel, and
was

Saint Wenefride. 163

was immediately carry'd out of Sight. The Standers by gave him for lost, as prudently supposing, that besides the evident Danger of drowning, he would be crush'd to death: For betwixt the Wheel and the Paved Bottom of the Channel under it, there is not the space of Two Inches, yet he was suddenly convey'd into the Ditch beyond the aforesaid Wheel. His Companion seeing the sad Accident, and knowing nothing of his Safety, rais'd a Mournful Loud Cry, which so alarm'd the *Master* and Forty Scholars, that they all ran out of School, to learn the Occasion of it. The *Miller* also, and others, were in the same fright; but one *William Bowen*, who was

was standing with an Angling Rod Four Yards below the Wheel, espy'd him endeavouring to creep out of the Ditch, and complaining that he had lost his Shoe. The Boy was taken into a House, and that moment a Surgeon was call'd: His Body being examin'd, the Youth was found not to have receiv'd any Crush or Contusion, except a little Skin ruffled off one Ankle, as a Mark to declare what would have become of him, if he had not been miraculously preserv'd.

Cornelius, the Son of *John Nicholas*, of the Parish of *Tre-maine*, in the County of *Cardigan*, about Two Miles distant from *Cardigan* Town, being a Young Man of Seventeen Years

Saint Wenefride. 165

Years of age, both Fatherless and Motherless, entred into Service with his Aunt. On the One and Twentieth of *December*, One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Seventy Three, a little before Night, he was struck with so great a Weakness by a sudden Blast, finding racking Pains from his Knees downwards, that he was not able to go or stand. Several Remedies were used, as Ointments, Plaisters, Cutting and Lancing about the Toes and Ancles, to the very Bones. They continued this Method till towards *Easter*, but finding them insignificant, and that they were rather prejudicial to him, 'twas resolv'd to convey him to Saint *Wenefride's*

fride's Well. His Relations were Indigent, and having no other means, he was recommended to the Charity of Good People, from Door to Door, on a Hand-Barrow. The *Welsh* distinguish themselves from other Nations, by a Cheerfulness in assisting those in great Necessity : They knew whither the Cripple was to be carry'd, and on what account, therefore they lent helping hands, that he might finish a Journey of Ninety Miles. He was brought to *Holy Well* on the Eleventh of *June*, and early Next Morning was put into the *Fountain*, being *Friday* in *Whitson-week*. No sooner was he in the Water, than he found himself perfectly recover'd ;
he

Saint Wenefride. 167

he walk'd in the *Well*, out of it, and ever after continued in good health, to the admiration of all those, who had been Spectators of his former miserable Condition. Glory be to God, Who is *Wonderful in His Saints*.

It carries a sort of Demonstration for Miracles, when those who obstinately oppose them, are constrain'd to own them. Amongst the rest, perchance there are none more positive in their Erroneous Opinions, than those Men call'd *Quakers*. They deny absolutely the Divine Efficacy of *Baptismal Water*, but the flowing Fountain of *Saint Wenefride* prevail'd with *Roger Whetstone* to renounce his Heresy, and by
Holy

Holy *Baptism* to become a devout *Christian Catholick*. This *Roger* by Education a *Quaker*, by Profession a Taylor, dwelling in *Sidmore*, within the Parish of *Bromesgrave*, in *Worcestershire*, at Sixty Years of age, was visited with a violent Infirmary, which disabled him to such a degree, that he could not feed himself. He was confin'd to his Bed Seventeen Weeks, after which he found an Abatement of the severe Pains, which before ran through his whole Body. He was so weak, when able to rise, that he could not put his hand to any Work, but halting on Crutches, he begged his bread, from Door to Door. Having continued *Three Years* in this

Saint Wenefride. 169

this sad Misery, he was told by a *Flintshire* Man, dwelling in his Neighborhood, that at a Place in his Country, call'd *Wenefride's Well*, great numbers of *Lame Persons*, and *Diseas'd*, were frequently, after a miraculous manner, restored to Health. It came into the *Quaker's* Mind, suggested by a better *Spirit* than commonly guided him, that the *Lord* would help him at that *Fountain*. In this he was so confident, that not the least Doubt occur'd to the contrary. Wherefore, in the Year One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Sixty Seven, he began his journey on Crutches, attended by a Young Girl, his Daughter; and after many Days Travel,

I he

he came to *Holy Well* about Noon, on the Twenty Eighth Day of *August*, in the aforesaid Year. He could not be induced to wash in the *Well*, that had a smattering of Popery and Supeftition, but fitting at the Side of it, he drank One Cup of the Water, and he became as it were in a Trance: returding to himself, he desir'd another Dish of the same Water, and having drunk it off he threw away Both his Crutches, and found himself *strangely, suddenly, and perfectly cured*. He walk'd round the *Well*, dropping many Tears of Joy, to join the Stream of that Miraculous Spring. The Power and Goodness of Saint *Wenefride's* Heavenly Spouse placed

Saint Wenefride. 171

placed the Miracle out of the reach of Cavil and Dispute, by healing an Old Cripple in a minute, with Two Draughts of Water. Another higher Cure was wrought in the Soul of this *Quaker*; for giving attention to the Inspirations of the *Holy Ghost*, and an impartial ear to the *Motives of Belief*, he embraced the *Roman Catholick Faith*. He and his Son (Eleven Years of age) received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, at which the greatest Quality of that County were pleased to stand *Patrines*.

Were it not to offer a needless Repetition of what is said already, I would set down at large the Attestation of *Robert Hill*, a most rigid *Quaker*, which

which lies now before me, concerning the Truth of the aforesaid Miracle. Have patience at least with some part of it, as he words it. I Robert Hill, of the County of Worcester, having lately been Overseer of the Poor of the Parish of Bromesgrave, within the said County, and now a Near Inhabitant of the said Town, do testify, That I am, and have been well acquainted with Roger Wiston, alias Whetstone, of about Sixty Years of age, Taylor, Dweller in the same Town; and that I knew him for these Three Last Years, Lame and Infirm, that he could not work at his Trade, nor go without Crutches, and so feeble, that he was not able to feed himself—
(Hill makes here a recital of his

Saint Wenefride. 173

his Ten Days Journey, and of his sudden Cure at the *Well*, as *Whetstone* related the same to him; then adds) For my own part, I can well say that I knew him *Infirm and Lane*, often coming, in these Late Years, on his *Crutches*, to beg at my Door; and now being return'd from Holy Well, is very Strong, and well able to work at his Trade, to the great Wonder of the Inhabitants of Bromesgrave, some whereof, presently upon his return, being Lane and Infirm, came to Holy Well, in hopes to be also cured; and upon their return they reported to me, that they were better in health than formerly, &c. — In witness hereto I put my hand, the Second Day of October, 1667. ROBERT HILL.

In the same Account the said

Robert Hill declares, how his own *Lame Girl*, of *Fourteen Years* of age, was cured, by only *making use of Holy Well Water*.

I could bring a *Cloud of Witnesses* (to use *Saint Paul's Expression* *) asserting other *Undeniable Miracles*, wrought by *Saint Wenefride's Intercession*, not in an *obscure Corner*, but *in the face of the Sun*. I solemnly declare, that I leave behind twice as many *Wonders*, happening in the *Last Century*, of which many were *Eye-Witnesses* at the *Holy Fountain*. *Holy Well* seems to resemble, in some sort, the *Probatina Pond*, where, in *Five Porches*, there lay a great *Multitude*

* Heb. xii. 1.

Saint Wenefride. 175

*titude of Sick Persons, of Blind, Lame, and Wither'd **. In the Travelling Season the Town appears populous, crowded with zealous *Pilgrims*, from all Parts of *Britain*. The *Well* it self receives a succession of *Visitants* from Sun-Rise till Late at Night. The many Hand-Barrows and Crutches, which have been hung at the Pillars, demonstrate the Mercies of *God*, and the Powerful Intercession of the *Virgin-Martyr*. They are soon remov'd by those who envy the Glory of our *Saint*. I forbear to recount at large the Recovery of Blindish Eyes, of Barren Women becoming fruitful, of inveterate violent Convulsions suddenly

* *St. John*, v. 3.

suddenly ceasing, of Deaf Persons favour'd with Hearing, of stubborn *Devils* cast out of *Possess'd* People (certainly the Immortal Spirits, who suffer the Eternal Torments of Hell, could not be forc'd away by the *material* Elements of a *Cold Bath*) These and many others of the Last Age I omit, not to increase the Price and Bulk of a Pocket-Book, as also that it may be ready to wait on those, to whom it is dedicated. S. *Augustin*, in his xii Book of the *City of God*, writing of a Blind Man, who received sight, and of other Miracles, when S. *Ambrose* translated the H. Bodies of SS. *Gervasius* and *Protasius*, thought it sufficient Conviction against the incredulous scoffing *Heathens*, that Im-

menso

Saint Wenefride. 177

menſo Populo Teſte, res geſta eſt, A vaſt Concourſe of People were able to atteſt the Truth of them; which is exactly our preſent Caſe.

I conclude with the Divine Meſſage the *Son of God* ſent to His *Precuſor* in Priſon, to confirm the Diſciples of the *Baptiſt*, and to confound the obdurate *Jews*, which with profound Humility, and the greateſt Deference imaginable, may be apply'd to our glorious *Patroneſs of Wales*, by what you read in this admirable Life. *Go and report that the Blind ſee, the Lamewalk, the Lepers are made clean, the Deaf hear, the Dead riſe again, to the Poor the Goſpel is preach'd **. The Omnipotence and Goodneſs of our Great God beador'd and prais'd, by all *Angels and Saints, for ever. Amen, Amen.* (* S. Mat. xi. v.) A

A

TABLE

Of the most

Material CONTENTS.

S 7. Beuno treats with S. Wenefride's Father, about the Building of a Church, P. 8.	
Saint Wenefride's Resolution of quitting the World, and of consecrating her self to God, 12.	
Lord Thewith gives his consent to Saint Wenefride,	17.
Cradocus attempts to dishonour S. Wenefride, and contemn'd, cuts off the Virgin's Head, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.	
The Judgment of God upon Cradocus,	32.
S. Beuno raises S. Wenefride to Life,	35.
S. Wenefride veiled a Religious Nun,	47.
S. Beuno leaves Finhon,	49.
Three Favours S. Beuno foretold concerning the Well,	52.
S. Wenefride models her Religious,	57.
The	

A TABLE.

<i>The Yearly Present S. Wenefride sent unto S. Beuno,</i>	61.
<i>S. Wenefride removes from Finhon, and is entertain'd by S. Deifer and S. Saturnus,</i>	69, 70, 71.
<i>How S. Wenefride was receiv'd at Guitherin,</i>	74.
<i>S. Wenefride is chosen Abbess of Guitherin,</i>	83.
<i>Her Method of governing,</i>	85.
<i>S. Wenefride favour'd with a Revelation of her Death,</i>	90.
<i>She comforts and advises her afflicted Family,</i>	92.
<i>S. Wenefride's Last Sickness, and the Last Exhortation to her Religious,</i>	93, 94, 95.
<i>Miracles wrought by S. Wenefride's Intercession,</i>	98.
<i>A Woman born blind, receives Sight at S. Wenefride's Well,</i>	106.
<i>Robberies near S. Wenefride's Well miraculously discovered,</i>	107, 108, 109, 110, 111.
<i>The occasion why S. Wenefride's Body was translated from Guitherin to Shrewsbury,</i>	114.
<i>Difficulties occurring before the Translation, and encouragement given by Heaven in visions,</i>	120, 121, 122.
<i>S. Wenefride's Body granted to the Monks of Shrewsbury,</i>	127.

A TABLE.

<i>A Miracle before the Holy Reliques were brought into Shrewsbury,</i>	128.
<i>S. Wenefride's Body brought to the Monastery by a solemn Procession, and honour'd as 'twas carry'd thither, by a Miracle,</i>	132.
<i>The Miraculous Cure of Sir Roger. Bodenhams,</i>	139.
<i>The Wonderful Cure of Mrs. Jane Wake-man,</i>	145.
<i>A Man struck dead by the Well Side, for his Irreligious Carriage,</i>	149.
<i>A Woman Bedrid some Years, recovers in an instant, by sending a Penny to S. Wenefride's Well,</i>	152.
<i>The Stupendious Recovery of Mrs. Mary Numan,</i>	156.
<i>The Miraculous Preservation of a Boy, from being drown'd or crush'd,</i>	162.
<i>The Instantaneous Cure of one Cornelius,</i>	164.
<i>The Surprising Cure of a Quaker,</i>	167.

ERRATUM.

PAG. 64, Lin. antepenult. for *His Last Founded Monastery* being there, read, *His First Founded Monastery*, and the Last he liv'd in, being there.

F I N I S.